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[Barrett (Eaton Stannard)]

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Satirical novel

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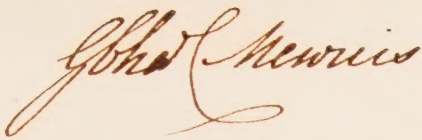

SIX WEEKS

AT

LONG'S.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SIX WEEKS

AT

LONG'S.

BY

A LATE RESIDENT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"LONGO *ordine gentes.*"

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.
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PREFACE.

BEFORE my reader enters upon the following work, it is natural that I should endeavour to conciliate his good opinion, and to anticipate any objections which may be made against the plan and execution of my story. That a great number of good-natured people will call it gross, libellous, scurrilous, personal, and Heaven knows what beside, is most certain. That the

author will therefore be called by the same names (only changing the above adjectives into substantives) is also pretty clear. That his book will be read notwithstanding, aye, still more read in proportion as these epithets are still more angrily repeated, is a third fact: and that the only difference between his scurrility and that of his reader is, that he has *written* only what they have *spoken*, is fact the last.

Now as to setting up a formal defence of this sort of writing, I have not the least intention so to

do. I shall merely say that I am countenanced in it by the example of several gentlemen and ladies of the highest rank in society, who have either themselves written, or caused to be written, satires upon their most intimate friends and acquaintance; and indeed I may add that I should never have been able to have collected the various anecdotes and characteristics dispersed throughout this work, but for the scandal which I have heard fall from time to time from others of the fashionable world, who would not, for the mines of Crœsus, have put them on paper. The

question is, then, what greater degree of impropriety exists in publishing by types, than in publishing by tongue, the foibles and follies of individuals. Certainly some people have a most happy knack of fine-drawing distinctions between cases, which, to the common observer, appear fac-similes of each other, as in that of two young bucks who had quarrelled, and each of whom, at the same moment, called the other a scoundrel. The friends of each (like most friends on such occasions) were very anxious that each should call the other out, and vindicate

their respective honours; but the young gentlemen not being quite so warm for the sport, alleged, in excuse for not doing so, that the word was uttered by both at the same instant. "'Tis no matter," said a friend to one of the quarrelling party, "whether you both spoke together or not; but your antagonist pronounced the offensive word *louder* than you did, therefore the insult was greater---therefore you must challenge him." "'Tis no matter," said a friend to the other quarrelling party, "whether you both spoke together or not; but your antagonist pro-

nounced the offensive word *lower* than you did, therefore he meant it for your private ear---therefore he intended that you should challenge him---therefore you must challenge him."

Now the public may contend as much as they please, whether I who print scandal, or the whole world who talk scandal—that is, whether the *loudest* or *lowest* voice should be considered as the greatest offender.

Sure, I am, that many of the personages recorded in these volumes

will feel (if they should guess who I am, and several of them must, though they will put their fingers on their lips for certain reasons) that I have not inflicted on them half the chastisement they deserve at my hands. They will doubtless call to mind the situation in which their infernal schemes have placed me; they well know that I have often, when they themselves were in the most trying circumstances that men could be placed in, held out my arm and raised them from the mire; they will recollect that I have upon more than one occasion consented even to sacrifice, in a measure, my

own character to save their's; they will recollect the vile advantage they took of that event; they will not forget the promises they then made to me; and their consciences will inform them, in how base, how unmanly, how ungentlemanly a manner they retracted, and shuffled, and prevaricated. Let them then say that I have treated them with severity. They cannot lay their hands on their hearts (their hearts! the wretches have none!) and assert that I have been too severe.

But the time may come when I shall again emerge, when I shall

again meet them face to face, when they shall shrink from me as from a basilisk, and when they shall own that all I now inflict upon them is moderation, is meekness itself, to what I may then have it in my power to execute. But enough of *false friends and deluding smilers*.

Were I to think the composition of a work of this nature worth pointing the attention of the reader to, I would observe it is written with a desire to imitate the light style of the lighter pieces of VOLTAIRE: a style peculiarly adapted

to familiar subjects, and not, I think, hitherto attempted in our language. Indeed, I much doubt whether our's be sufficiently colloquial to admit of it with facility. The novels of FIELDING have a heavy sort of wit; those of SMOLLET are also laboured: even the EVELINA and CECILIA, though the works of a female pen, want that delicacy of raillery, that easy strain of irony, which charms the reader so much in the French writers, and which creates an interest, independent of the story itself. Perhaps a novel, lately published, called *The History of*

John De Castro, is the *only* one in our language which appears to be composed after this model; and though the style is rather forced, and the wit too frequent, it sufficiently proves that our writers may attain it much more easily than it has hitherto been thought possible. I myself consider this the only style in which the French excel us.

That I may not have succeeded in my attempt at this style is highly probable---I repeat that it is only an attempt. The critics must decide for me, or rather the

public; for it is the reviewer's business to decry every innovation at first, and never to be brought round till it becomes an innovation no longer.

SIX WEEKS

AT

LONG'S.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a certain street in London, called Bond Street, which many good folks who have lived forty years in the Borough never yet saw, or cared to see, but which, nevertheless, must be either trodden or ridden once a-day at least by the gay folks of the west end. On first entering it, an ignorant stranger

would probably express some surprise at finding it the daily lounge of the town, as it is narrow, crooked, hilly, and almost entirely composed of shops. But how must the poor man stare when told that these very qualities are its recommendations, and that the obstacles which it presents form its chief conveniences! He sees two strings of carriages, each reaching the whole length of the street, and moving parallel in opposite directions, but so slowly, that he would suppose it a funeral, only for the grave faces of the people inside; whereas most of those who follow a hearse are merry enough, because they profit by the trip. He little suspects, however, that the slowness of this procession promotes the business of

it, which is admiration or assignation; and that the faces are grave, from the serious nature of two such important objects: for at certain hours of the day, certain young gentlemen may be seen parading the footpaths, and watching the transit of certain equipages, in order to receive certain signals therefrom. Perhaps a lady may happen to have two fingers outside the chariot window, or her lap-dog may chuse to put forth a single paw. This, by previous concert, sufficiently notifies the time when; and as to the place where, it is often notorious enough. But if this signal should chance not to be seen, a lucky confusion of huddled chariots may enable the gallant to interchange words, perhaps billets, with

the fair one, and then both chariot and amour go on as well as ever. Sometimes a beau lies *perdue* at a fruiterer's:—he has seen the dear vehicle pass, and he calculates, by his accurate knowledge of a Bond Street journey, that in one hour, so many minutes, it will return. Out, therefore, he issues, and takes off his hat, to shew the coachman how much he respects his mistress. Her lord may be, for aught the beau cares, just behind him; and for aught the lady cares, he may be a thousand miles off. Probably, however, he is only prosecuting a culinary intrigue at home.

But this most notable street contains other devices for the happy meetings of those pairs, who, as they themselves

modestly confess, are not depraved in heart, but merely drawn a little aside, by an unconquerable attachment. Lady —— alights at a fashionable milliner's, to chuse a dress for an approaching gala. A young gentleman and his wife (as the milliner is supposed to conjecture) walk in about the same time. The wife sits admiring the bonnets, while the gentleman walks about admiring the house. Lady —— meantime has slipped into a private room to adjust her dress; and the gentleman having also happened to saunter in there, assists her to re-adjust it.

If, however, circumstances turn out so perverse, that signals are misinterpreted, or not remarked, there is a beautiful little toy-shop in the street, where

a lady may leave a note, to be forwarded according to the direction; the mistress of the shop being notorious for secrecy and discretion—at least with regard to others. The lady then remounts her chariot, with a dancing man of paper, or a leathern dog, for papa's darling, and the toy-woman pockets five guineas for the purchase.

One would imagine that such gentlemen as cannot afford more than two pairs of boots in the year would naturally be cautious of wearing them out; and yet these are precisely the description of people who patrole Bond Street with most assiduity. Any one whose avocations oblige him to pass that way frequently, can never miss meeting about a dozen faces and boots, which

must have become as familiar to him as his own. Indeed, it is thought, that the flags are endowed with a property of keeping beaux fresh, just as leaden troughs do plaice and turbot; for it is remarked, that he who walks Bond Street all day, and every day, procures so good an appetite there, that he is quite content to dine at an eighteen-penny ordinary.

Thus much we thought necessary to say of Bond Street, because it is destined to be the principal seat of those adventures we are about to record; for, be it known, that this street, among its other acquirements, has to boast of Long's Hotel, and that Long's Hotel is a spacious edifice, dedicated to the accommodation of any family who can

pay for it. We must not pretend to specify its advantages over every other hotel in the world. We only know that it is, at present, the fashion; and that fashion is the art of making one thing superior to another, by the simple process of its being called so by a few fashionable people. It is not, now-a-days, whether the champaign be prime, or the salad oiled to a drop; but whether those who drink and eat of them be personages, or only persons. This it is which constitutes the superiority of hotels; to say nothing of the fact, that a dinner eats better in one street, though it may be dressed better in another.

It was one delicious evening in the summer season—nature had adorned

her bosom with its accustomed nosegay —the sky was blue, the trees were green——But why describe a rural picture, when the scene is laid in town? It was, then, one fine afternoon in the London season,—the streets were dusty, the Thames water had brought forth its insects, and art, taking one step before nature, had matured about a dozen peaches for the metropolis, when four *youths* sat enjoying their iced claret in the coffee-room at Long's.

"Pray, my lord," said one of them, the fashionable Mr. Bellair—"Pray, my lord, lay aside your book, and let us enjoy your comments on it."

"You would probably mistrust their truth," replied Lord Leander, "for

Scott, who I am reading, the town says is at least my rival."

"At *most*, your lordship means," said Bellair.

"You know, Bellair, I detest flattery, and so much so, that when etiquette obliges me to praise a man in a dedication, I always take an opportunity to abuse him in some subsequent production."

"The fact is," said Bellair, "put three notes of admiration after any dedicatory panegyric I have ever read, and it instantly becomes a poignant satire."

"I will probably adopt that idea in my next dedication," observed his lordship—if, indeed, I should ever write again, which I assure you I never will."

"I am happy to hear you say so,"

cried Bellair. Lord Leander opening his mouth, dropped the toothpick that he had been twisting about among his teeth.

"Because," continued Bellair, "your lordship often promised the same thing in print, and afterwards changed your opinion for the better."

"You are the wittiest man in England," said Lord Leander; "but I do not see why I, or any other person, should not change our opinions every hour of the day. Consistency of sentiment often produces inconsistency of conduct. Changes in opinion, graduating through a series of years, brought the British constitution to the perfection it possesses; and the result must be similar in an individual. This is my unalterable opinion."

"Which, by your own rule, your lordship may alter in an hour," said Bellair.

"Never," returned his lordship. "When a man knows that his opinion is right, he need not change it at all. But come—as opinions are the topic, what think you of Scott?"

"That if you and he exchanged a portion of your several characteristics, he would, perhaps, have less froth, and you less sediment. This is *my* unalterable opinion."

Lord Leander, with much industry, began to adjust the collar of his shirt; for he had cashiered his neckcloth.

The mutual silence which now ensued gave their companions an opportunity of talking in a more audible key.

"For my part," said the Marquis of

Veneric, "I think Paris contains an epitome of every pleasure that the rest of the world enjoys in part and in detail."

"*O Ciel!*" cried Petitoe, raising his hands, eyes, and shoulders (all natives of Great Britain), with the shrug which he had acquired while he was a fortnight in France, "'tis absolutely a perfect Paradise."

"A Paradise Lost, then," observed Bellair, and looked at Lord Leander for commendation; but Lord Leander had just changed his unalterable opinion as to who was the wittiest man in England.

"Paris," cried the Marquis, "is so delightful a place, that I wonder how I ever came to leave it."

"I make a point," said Bellair, "to leave London when the porters begin to eat asparagus; but as for Paris, I would never leave it, because I would never enter it."

"'Tis evident, then, that you never did enter it," said Petitoe. "I was there only three months, and——"

"A fortnight, I thought," interrupted the Marquis.

"True," resumed Petitoe. "But don't mind me. I have the worst memory in the world. However, one man sees more in a fortnight than—and, indeed, I knew all the grandees—Then the Louvre is an astonishing affair. One may pick up a taste there, before one can look about one. The Hottentot Venus is dead."

"But the Venus de Medicis," said the Marquis, "still lives there, in the persons of half the French women. By Jove, they are worth all the women of England put together. Actually, I have often been slighted, nay, repulsed, by your English wives—but the French ladies—bless me, they never think of such a thing. And as to their husbands, I must say, they are not in the least addicted to bringing actions for damages—a frightful English custom, which corrupts the morals of the rising generation, by making voluptuous scenes public. Verdicts of ten, or twenty, or thirty thousand pounds damages, do not tend half so much to prevent the spread of this interesting foible, as the courts of law and the newspapers do to induce its universality."

"In point of dress, at least," said Lord Leander, again laying down his book, "the French women are execrable. They have quite exploded the Grecian turn of drapery, which is the only model fit for females."

"And as to their head-dresses," said Bellair, "they have grown to such a prodigious height, that I am told all the new houses have their doors reaching up to their ceilings."

"Now I think those dresses excessively elegant," said Lord Leander. "But there is no disputing about tastes either in bonnets or in poetry. For my own part, I think nothing worth an opinion."

"That is your lordship's opinion, then," observed Bellair. "But had you seen the beautiful girl who arrived

here yesterday, you would certainly think her worth an opinion."

"Who is she?" asked the Marquis of Veneric.

"An East Indian, it seems," answered Bellair. "Her father died in Bengal about a year ago, and left her eighty thousand pounds. But they say she is almost an idiot."

"So much the better," cried Petitoe. "And does she reside in this hotel?"

"Yes; with her uncle and his wife; none of whom have ever been in town before: and, I am told, that the vulgar ignorance of both those guardians is only surpassed by her own folly."

"So much the better," cried Petitoe again.

"I must see this lovely idiot," said

the Marquis. "Nay, I should like to converse with her too. I am almost sated with your women of sense; and for the mere novelty of the thing, would fain make love to a fool."

As the conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a stranger, we shall endeavour to make our readers better acquainted with the personages already before them, previous to his introduction.

Lord Leander was a young nobleman of some genius, whose only fixed sentiment on earth consisted in a full conviction of that genius. He had travelled a little, read a little, and written a little; and had he travelled, read, and written, either less or more, ignorance might have made him modest,

or knowledge might have taught him that he had much more to learn. However, he was, beyond all question, the very best poet England ever boasted—among her nobility. Perhaps, too, he might be considered at the head of all our minor poets, which is almost unqualified praise; for the only difference between a minor poet, and a poet properly so called, is merely the difference between mortality and immortality.

His lordship also had, or affected to have, a sovereign contempt for pleasure, glory, life, soul, body, and this world: we forbear from stating the degree of estimation in which he held the next. To be dissatisfied, he thought, was to be philosophical, and that de-

claiming against human nature was being an honour to it. However, these silly principles are generally the first that a young man adopts who sets out in life with the ambition of being a singular genius; and indeed his lordship's friends still cherished a fond hope that he would at last discard them entirely, as he had already done his neckcloth.

Bellair was of the ton. The Prince once praised his coat, so he has worn a most accurate one ever since; nay, he has even assisted the great Allen in consultations upon the expediency of sloping the collars or shortening the skirts. He had also the satisfaction to reckon himself a man of wit,—a singular opinion, which he had con-

tracted Heaven knows how. All men, however, have their peculiarities, and his great ambition was to make an illustrious hand pull the bell.

The Marquis of Veneric had now attained his sixtieth year, and valued himself upon having ruined more women in his grey old age, than the common run of gallants could do in the blooming prime of life. Till very lately, he disdained to make any other amorous conquests than of married women. He thought that fruit the best which the birds had already been pecking at. But latterly, his taste, forsaking the refined and sentimental mistress, applied itself to the unsophisticated simplicity of the cottager. He no longer admired beauty in diamonds, and essenced with

a thousand sweets: his delight now was an Irish lass in russet, with a devil of a brogue. We know that epicures, having satiated their palates with the most exquisite viands, are often content to end their days with the sugared pap upon which they began them. Apicius and Heliogabalus had dinners now and then which cost them many thousands per dish. It is true his lordship had the same; but such was his credit, that payment was never demanded till long afterwards; and not even then, till a certain number of his countrymen had taken care to see that the bill was not overcharged.

As to Petitoe, he was a harmless little fellow, though of an excellent family; at the same time, being a

younger son, this was the less surprising. The small property that devolved to him on the death of his father was now almost expended in endeavours to keep pace with his more wealthy companions; and as he had, besides, some debts, which he was every week promising to discharge the week after, his conscience suggested to him the necessity of setting himself up by marriage. His small black eyes were, therefore, constantly peering about for a partner in trade, but hitherto without success. To attain this object, he had not, it is true, many qualifications, and yet such did not happen to be his own opinion. Though his person precluded dignity, he thought it made amends by neatness; and if he had not broad

shoulders, he had a small foot. But, above all, he was at Paris a fortnight, and about two hours on the plains of Waterloo; both which accomplishments, heightened and set off by the inventive faculty, in which he was far from deficient, bade fair, he believed, for the enthralment of any heiress under three thousand a-year.

Such was the party that occupied a box at Long's.

CHAPTER II.

We mentioned, in the former chapter, that the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a stranger. This was a fat, ruddy, grey-headed gentleman, whose wrinkled boots, and superfluity of breeches, were evidently provincial; while his coat, open and thrown back, depended for its support more upon the breadth of his shoulders than the handicraft of his tailor.

He dropped his weight into an opposite box, whistling just loud enough to be heard by himself, and with his thumbs hooked in the shoulder-holes

of his waistcoat; but it was the sudden and Stentorian voice with which he called "Hollo, waiter!" that arrested the attention of the company.

"Coming, Sir!" cried the waiter, as he was leaving the room.

"There goes Lunnun, by crackins!" exclaimed the stranger, bursting into a tremendous fit of laughter, and half turning towards the Marquis's box. "Well, if I don't put that down for our club!—Coming, says the fellow, and he going!—Well, I have now been two days in Lunnun, and such a place—Well!—Coming, cries the fellow, and he going!"

Another hearty laugh closed his oration; and all the opposite box, except Lord Leander, joined in it. But

their mirth was at the jester, not the jest.

He now took a short Dutch pipe from his pocket, and after having filled it with tobacco out of a tin box, began to smoke without the smallest ceremony.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Petitoe, with a shrug.

"We must have him turned out," said the Marquis.

"By no means," said Lord Leander. "If you were in the Morea, you must turn out the whole nation, at this rate. A man who has travelled, learns to be a citizen of the world. To him it is indifferent whether the quaker wears his hat, the Mahomedan his turban, or the——In short, human

nature, or rather custom—custom is——"

Lord Leander, as usual, wanted a word, or perhaps a thought—for he could only write and read philosophy: he always failed when he attempted to talk it.

"Let the waiter manage him," said Bellair. "For my own part, I vote we humour the fellow; and, if I mistake not, he will afford us no small diversion."

Just at this juncture the waiter reappeared, who seeing, with much amazement, the stranger enveloped in smoke, went up to him, and said,

"I beg pardon, Sir, but smoking is contrary to the rule of this house."

"I smoke you!" cried the stranger,

winking, and laying down his pipe. "So bring your own pipes and tobacco, and then let's see if you'll object. Ay, ay, 'twas a civil way enough of telling me that I must purchase in your house what I use in your house.—Ha, jolly boy, I'm up to you Lunnuners already!" And he enforced his sentiment with a slap of no trifling potency on the back of the waiter.

"Indeed, Sir," said the waiter, modestly retreating out of his reach, "we keep neither pipes nor tobacco here, because most of the gentlemen who frequent our house dislike the smell of the smoke."

"And yet most of them are earning the smell of brimstone, I warrant!" retorted the stranger, chuckling at his

own wit, "so, no more words. There, take and empty my pipe, and bring me a sneaker of punch."

"We don't allow punch either, Sir," said the waiter.

"Whew!" whistled out the other; and then turning short towards the opposite box—"What have you got there, gentlemen? For rabbit me, if I won't get the same of it, whatever it is. I may be ordering all night else."

"Admirable claret, I assure you, Sir," answered Bellair; "and if you will condescend to join our party, you shall taste it."

"Why then confound me if *you* are a Lunnuner, however!" cried the stranger, striding across, and seizing the hand of Bellair, which he almost

wrenched out of its socket. Then, without further preamble, he squeezed himself in by his side, and sat down.

Now there is nothing so true, as that two men may do precisely the same thing, and yet, without any describable difference between their manner of doing it, the one may disgust, and the other please. In the stranger's case, a certain air of utter unconsciousness that offence was possible, together with a complacent look all round, which seemed to say, "I am heartily welcome," sufficed to make him so. At the same time, we must confess that the object of his inviters (the sublime Leander always excepted) was more to entertain themselves than him. "You will soon be better acquainted

with the ways of town," said Bellair. "But probably your part of the country prefers punch and a pipe beyond any other recreation."

"Ay, ay, we have a club for the special purpose," replied the stranger, "where I shall be happy to introduce you—or you, gentlemen."

"We are much obliged," said the Marquis; "and, doubtless, we should meet a most elegant assemblage in the members."

"You Lunnuners have such a roundabout way of saying things," returned the stranger, "that one does'nt always well know what you would be at; but if you mean that we are a set of hearty companions, you a'nt much out."

"You live in a hunting country, I presume?" said Petitoe.

"Ah, you rogue!" cried the stranger, shaking his head in a most knowing manner.

"And in a hospitable neighbourhood too?" observed Bellair.

"Ah, you sly rogue!" cried the stranger, with a look of droll archness that was irresistible.

"What possible words of mine could have procured me the honour of so flattering an epithet?" asked Bellair.

"Round-about again!" cried the stranger. "But now, do you think I'm such a numskull as not to see that you Lunnuners are all driving, and driving, and driving, with your 'hunting co*untry*,' and your 'hospitable

neighbourhood,' and so on, just to find out who I am? Well, 'tis but natural, after all, and I a'nt ashamed to tell neither.—So, without more ceremony, I am Barnaby Coulter, Esq. of Northumberland,—worth about three thousand a-year—and a magistrate: and I and wife have come up to Lunnun to introduce wife's niece, poor Hyppolita, to some of her relations, who live here, in hopes they'll ask her to spend some time with 'em. Poor thing, she's only just arrived from the East Indies—and her father died there, and her old governess died on the passage—and 'twould be well if the poor girl herself died too, for she's overloaded with money; and, as well as we can make out, a perfect natural in her mind. So

now you have my whole history, my bucks, and here's to you one and all." And he tossed off a glass of claret.

"Then you are the gentleman who came here yesterday," said Petitoe.

"Ay, ay," cried Barnaby Coulter, Esq. "and 'tis a provoking thing enough to have lived sixty years where every fool knew me; and now, on a sudden, to find myself popt upon a strange place, where the fools are all wondering who the dickens I am."

"'Tis no proof of our folly, however," said Bellair, "that we believe you to be a most respectable gentleman.—But come, give us a proof of your sagacity, by guessing what sort of people we are."

"Let me see," said Coulter, looking

at each of the company, with good-humoured keenness. Then turning to Bellair:--"You, now--you are an officer out of regimentals, who can't afford a coloured coat as often as the fashion changes, and have grown fat since you got that one you are wearing, it pinches you so confoundedly about the waist."

A laugh from the company, (the sublime Leander as usual excepted) encouraged him to proceed.

"That gentleman there," said he, nodding towards Petitoe, "by his white hands, and wigified hair, should be a great little lady's man; and, I warrant, skips about amongst 'em as nimble as a squirrel."

The company again applauded, and he went on.

"I don't know what to say of that gentleman yonder," looking at the Marquis: "but he seems a steady old cock, that has got a counter, and a fat wife, and a chubby set of squealing boys and girls,—hey, Sir?"

It was a delicate subject, but the Marquis felt chagrined only at his not having been taken for a libertine.

"And as for that young man," continued Coulter, pointing at Lord Leander, who was still poring over his book, "'tis plain he knows how to read; but whether he knows any thing else upon this good earth, Lord knows, for I'm sure I don't."

"At least, I know," said Lord Leander, raising his head, "that you, Sir, are a great deal too free in your remarks."

"Now don't you be angry," cried Coulter, stretching across the table, and laying his broad hand upon Lord Leander's.

Lord Leander drew his own away, just as if a serpent had stung it.

"It don't bite, man," cried Coulter.

"But it may soil," retorted Lord Leander.

"Bless your pretty baby-heartedness!" cried Coulter, laughing immoderately.

"This is beyond endurance," said the heavenly-pensive poet, rising, and leaving the table.

"Come, give it a parting shake," said Coulter, reaching out his hand, with invincible good-humour.

His lordship waved a repulsory motion with his own.

"Why, then," cried Coulter, "you might just as well have coaxed it; for, by crackins, it could lick ten of you."

After his lordship had seated himself in another box—

"Who the plague is that there chap?" asked Coulter.

"Lord Leander," said Bellair, "and esteemed the first poet of the present day."

"How the mischief!" exclaimed Coulter,—"a poet, and a lord too!—Egad, I suppose you are all lords, hey?"

"The only remaining title among us is the Marquis of Veneric.—Allow me to introduce him," said Bellair: but, contrary to his expectation, Coulter bore the intelligence without a change of muscle.

"I am right glad of this job," said he; "for I never was in company with a lord yet, and I wanted sadly to see what sort of gentry they are."

The bottle went round.—Bellair was inventing impromptus and repartees for the next day, and the Marquis and Petitoe were paying court to Coulter; for the one wanted a fool, and the other a fortune. Meantime, poor Coulter sat swallowing glass after glass, ridiculing the Lunnuners, boasting his own superior acuteness, and unbosoming all his family secrets. At length, leaning both his arms over the table, he gave signal, by a profound snore, that all was over. His companions then departed, leaving the funeral ceremony to the waiter.

CHAPTER III.

Poor Coulter did not subside into a state of insensibility until after he had begged of his entertainers to visit him the next morning—an invitation not a little agreeable to the Marquis and Petitoe, both of whom resolved on availing themselves of it.

Accordingly, at one o'clock precisely, Petitoe, rigged out and betrimmed to a degree that afforded him much satisfaction, was announced, and ushered into one of the drawing-rooms at Long's, where he found Coulter conning the *Morning Chronicle*, and an

elderly lady, dressed out in all the tawdriness of country taste, ready, in a half-rising posture, to receive him.

"Aha! my man!" cried Coulter, as Petitoe made his appearance: "who would suppose such a little carcase as your's could out-drink a mountain like me."

"You did us a most extreme great honour in condescending so far," said Petitoe; "and indeed the claret was excellent—I never drank finer in France—the *verdeur* was inimitable.—This is a beautiful day.—May I beg to be introduced to your lady?"

"Odsbad! here she is—Mrs. Coulter—Mr. Potatoe, at your service."

"Your fair niece, I presume, is still

enjoying her morning slumbers," said Petitoe."

"Lard, no, Sir," answered Mrs. Coulter—"she's only just run up stairs, to—to—"

"To what?" cried Coulter.

"Oh, only just to—to—"

"Zooks, Dorothy! speak out. It can't be any harm, whatever it is."

"Bless me, then, 'twas to try on a new silk spencer," said Mrs. Coulter; "but I did'nt know whether 'twere Lunnun-bred to confess to sich a thing. Is it, Mr. Potatoe?"

What must have been the feelings of poor little Petitoe, to hear himself suddenly metamorphosed into a potatoe! Mere human fortitude could not endure it.

"Pardon me, Madam," said he, "my name is Petitoe."

On this subject she had no right to decide, and therefore she gave it up with a thousand apologies, which she had just concluded, when the door opened, and a young lady ran into the room. On seeing Petitoe, she stopped short, dropped an awkward curtsey, and being introduced to him by Mrs. Coulter as her niece, Hyppolita Belmore, she slunk to the farther end of the room, with her head down, and seated herself on the edge of a chair.

Petitoe thought he had never beheld so beautiful a creature. Her raven-black hair was divided on a high forehead, and ran down, in natural curls, at either side; while her hazle eyes,

shaded by long fringes, expressed a softness approaching to languor, and, at the same time, a degree of animation and intelligence, which seemed utterly inconsistent with idiotism. Her lips were pouting, ruddy, and delicious; and, now half open, disclosed two brilliant rows of teeth. Her complexion was clear and delicate, and the turn of her features perfect Grecian. But nothing could surpass the light symmetry of her form; and Petitoe, as he concluded his survey of it with her foot, confessed, without envy, that it was infinitely smaller and more slender than his own. Were he capable of deeper reflection, he might well have moralized upon the mysterious profusion with which nature

dispenses some of her gifts, and the no less mysterious parsimony with which she withholds others. But Petitoe himself was so far an instance of her parsimony, that he could not philosophize upon it. But then he could, at any given time, talk of the weather; and accordingly he made trial of the fair fool with it.

"You had charming weather for your journey up to town, ma'am," said he.

"Sir!" cried she, starting, and opening her eyes upon him with a broad unmeaningness, which instantly convinced him of her folly. "O dear, yes, Sir."

"You were never in town before, I presume?" resumed he.

A broader stare, and, "Oh, dear, no, Sir."

"Say something to the gentleman, my love," whispered her aunt.

"Yes, Madam," answered the idiot. But Petitoe was too intent upon displaying his own oratory to give her an opportunity.

"Town is certainly a most excessive sweet place," said he, trying to engage her weak intellect by a magnificent description of it. "The streets are so full of elegant equipages—and then the shops—nothing but jewels, and silks, and gold repeaters, and cakes!"

"Good laws!" cried the idiot. Petitoe, much encouraged, proceeded with redoubled ardour and fluency.

"And then the palaces!—but every

house is a palace—then such a bustle! —'Make way,' says one,—'I'll knock you down,' says another.——'Her grace's carriage stops the way,' says the link-boy. Butchers' shops, fishmongers' shops—a dinner at every corner! —and all this is nothing to Paris, where I have lately been."

"Good laws!" cried the idiot again.

"I have indeed, Ma'am; and at Waterloo too."

But just at this moment the Marquis of Veneric was announced.

His lordship entered the room with all that easy consciousness and haughty humility for which he was so distinguished. Coulter received him with a hearty freedom, and his wife with very little trepidation, indeed, considering

that he wore his star, and that she had never seen a star till this wondrous moment. As to Petitoe, he wished the star in the heavens, and the Marquis along with it; for he boded no good from the visit of such a man to an old rustic couple and a beautiful fool.

The Marquis played his game with his usual adroitness. Not a syllable to the principal object of his visit, but the most kind concern, the most friendly anxiety to make town agreeable to the old lady. Petitoe too was as assiduous, on his part, to pay court, and share some little of that attention which she heaped upon his lordship; but all in vain. He wanted a star: and there was besides a sweet terror, an exalted awfulness thrilling

through the heart of Mrs. Coulter, whenever she had occasion to say: "Your lordship," which made her seek for that occasion as often as she could form a tolerable sentence.

At length the Marquis, who had often cast a quick and guarded eye towards Hyppolita, unable any longer to restrain his curiosity, turned suddenly round, and asked her, whether she was desirous of seeing the opera?

"Me!"—said she, dropping her head, and beginning to plait her white pocket-handkerchief with infinite assiduity—"Gracious! I know no such person."

"Hold up your head, my dear," said Mrs. Coulter.

"Sweet simplicity!" said the Mar-

quis, in a sort of confidential whisper to Mrs. Coulter.

"Aye, poor thing!" said Mrs. Coulter, delighted at a sort of confidential whisper from a lord—"she's almost quite a perfect non-natural."

"Hush!" whispered the Marquis again,—"or she may hear you."

"Bless you—I beg pardon—bless your lordship, I should say, she don't even know the meaning of the word."

"'Tis a great pity," observed the Marquis, bowing, "that she should be incapable of comprehending your elegant conversation. But will you oblige me, Madam, by granting me one favour?"

"Most undoubtedly," replied Mrs. Coulter, who, after his lordship's

compliment, could not have refused him the last favour she had upon earth.

"It is to accept these tickets for the opera. They will admit three to the pit, which, you may not be aware, is as fashionable a part of that house as the boxes."

"Oh, your lordship!"—cried Mrs. Coulter, reddening with delight—"your lordship is too good. See, Barnaby, what his lordship has given us. His lordship has given us three tickets for the opera!"

"My lord, you are spoiling that old woman," cried Coulter, laughing: "howsomever, rusty as she is, let her take a month's polishing, and welcome; only she mus'n't forget her cheese-making after it."

"I must, however, stipulate for the young lady's accompanying you," said the Marquis; "and I shall certainly join you there myself. Besides the pleasure of your company, my good Madam, I long to see the effect of such a splendid exhibition upon her unsophisticated mind."

The lady having promised, the Marquis rose to go; but seeing Petitoe lingering behind,

"Come, Petitoe," said he, "give me your arm up Bond Street. I wish to have some of your amusing chat about Paris."

Petitoe, very naturally, left a fool for a Marquis; so both the visitors retired together.

It was then, indeed, that Mrs. Coul-

ter's tongue resumed all its native spirit, and that her words, so long curbed and bitted before nobility, rushed into an unbridled career of praise. He was *so* humble, and *so* kind, and *so* charming, and *so* agreeable; and "his lordship," and "the Marquis," and "the Marquis," and "his lordship," ran as glibly from her lips as if she had pronounced them (which she never had) a hundred times in her life before. Honest Coulter merely said he thought him a good-natured old fellow; and as for the fool, she had no opinion on the subject. Petitoe's name was mentioned once, as we have heard from good authority.

This important æra in the visiting annals of the Coulter family happening

on a Thursday, and Saturday being opera night, Mrs. Coulter next turned her bewildered thoughts towards the preparation of dresses. Accordingly, a coach was summoned; and she and Hyppolita having stepped into it, she desired the coachman, in general terms, to drive to a milliner's. The fellow, having received so unlimited an order, thought himself fully justified in driving two miles to a milliner of his own choice; both for the purpose of doubling his fare, and of patronizing a young lady who had often done him acts of kindness, at a time when he was a ticket-porter, and she an oyster-wench. It is pleasing to us to record these little traits of gratitude.

Master Whip, therefore, drove by a

circuitous route (in order, no doubt, that the ladies should see the town) to the Strand, and there stopped at a small house, on the door of which was painted: "Craggles, Milliner."

As Mrs. Coulter and Hyppolita stepped out of the coach, two gentlemen were just passing by, who, however, stopped short the moment they saw the fool. One of them, having given full scope to a broad stare, asked the coachman whether he knew any thing of the young lady and her companion, who had just alighted and entered the shop?

"Know!"—cried he, with a sly and sidelong nod of the head,—"as well as I would know half-a-crown, if you gave it to me."

As soon as the sum insinuated could well be drawn from a pocket and put into a hand, he found it in his own, and consequently felt himself bound in honour, though not in truth (for that partnership has long been dissolved) to give the donor the worth of his money.

"That there young one," said he, "is but new on the town; and that there old one passes for her relation. They pretend to pass for people of character too; but only tip the girl of the shop a wink and a whisper, and a guinea, and your business is done."

Accordingly, the gentleman entered the shop, administered the wink, whisper, and guinea, gave a still broader stare, added a smile, by way of a "I

must have you, curse me!" and then with his friend proceeded on his walk.

Now, after this specimen of elegant and sentimental intrigue, our readers may feel a desire to learn something about the personages who so ably conducted it: nor shall we have the cruelty to keep people in suspense who are good-natured enough to peruse such an ill-natured book as our own. And here we must beg leave, once for all, to return our sincere thanks to those readers, who, hearing that a work is replete with slander and personality, and such as ought never to have been published, run that moment and increase its publicity, by first purchasing it themselves, and then enticingly re-

prehending its publication to others. This, we repeat, is a signal instance of good-nature towards the author; because it sells his book, at the expense of his reader's consistency: for, undoubtedly, the dissemination of a satire depends upon the purchaser, not the composer; and, therefore, he who reads it cannot, without self-condemnation, abuse him who writes it.

One of the above-mentioned, heroes was a nobleman by birth, a gentleman by courtesy, and a gamester by profession. Having expended a considerable estate upon odd-and-even, he at length found himself obliged to exchange one story high for two stories high. In a short time, either taste or necessity led him to take a small lodging in a small street,

and to sport one horse, instead of a curricle and pair. He had, however, enough of money remaining to amass about half a stone of halfpence, and also to purchase a supper for some wealthy spendthrifts; and then, having previously ascertained how many individual halfpence, arranged in close lines, would carpet his little parlour, he welcomed his supper-party thither, with much cordiality. About that famous hour, when ghosts and drunkenness are so prevalent, he proposed, as if from the moment, a large stake upon the carpet experiment. Every one deposited a hundred pounds, and every one made a guess. Tables, chairs, &c. being removed, and the halfpence marshalled, it appeared that his lordship had come

nearest to the number, and the consequence was—one story high again. But we should tire our readers in describing the various stories belonging to his lordship. Suffice it to say, that at the precise period when our history commences, he had got a step in the world, from a second-hand gig to a gig warranted new; and as the change in his vehicle was generally the barometer of his purse, we calculate that he might, at this moment, be in possession of about fifty guineas; half-a-crown of which and one guinea went to the coachman and milliner. We must now sign the character with the name—Lord Catson.

The gentleman accompanying him was Captain Adon, who cherished

such an amiable partiality for his own Grecian face, that he indulged it even with rouge. His hands too, being pretty, demanded some share in his favour, and he humoured their whim with the greatest good-nature imaginable. The palms, therefore, were tinged with vermilion, and the backs whitened with enamel. Each individual nail daily consumed five minutes of his mortal life; not a hair on his head but had its fated length assigned to it, and a weekly census numbered the hairs of his eye-brow, nor suffered one capillary intruder to grow there unplucked.

To wish for the love of a young woman, is natural to a young man. To wish for the love of many young

women, is more natural still. To wish for the love of young women, who have many suitors beside, is the most natural of all. Now those who have most suitors are of course the frail sisterhood; and the more depraved they grow, the more suitors they have. It was, therefore, highly natural that a man of Captain Adon's ambition should pant after the singular and difficult honour of being loved to distraction by a street-walker. Accordingly, he employed a great portion of his time in assailing, with the most delicate attentions, and insinuating graces, the hacknied hearts of those nymphs who pique themselves upon their promiscuous good-nature. Nor were his unique attempts altogether unsuccess-

ful. He was said to have already broken one depraved heart, and to have turned one brain mad which liquor could never make drunk. Such was the person, and such the ruling passion of Captain Adon. We must now return to our ladies.

They found only a few dusty caps and muslins in the dress-room; but then they found Miss Craggles so obliging as to promise that they should have every thing made up, and on their toilets, before Saturday evening. They therefore bespoke, under her advice, a sufficient assortment of fashionable dresses.

It required no great ingenuity, on the part of Miss Craggles, to sift Mrs. Coulter respecting the birth, parentage,

and station in life, both of herself and her ward. Indeed, to be candid, this ostensible dress-maker was driving her real trade in making these discoveries. The shop afforded her only a trifling revenue; but the apartments above stairs proved more lucrative. It was, besides, her vocation to know the haunts, histories, and exigencies of every pretty wretch who made a livelihood of her face; and to sell the ruin of an innocent girl to one man, and afterwards dispose of her fictitious ruin to another. In the latter case she was often better paid than in the former.

And now, the ladies having bespoken, and the milliner extracted, all that they severally wanted, a mutual

separation took place; and after a little more shopping, Mrs. Coulter and Hyppolita landed safe in the hotel, at half past five o'clock.

During the short interval between half past five o'clock on that day, and eight o'clock on Saturday evening, no doubt several events of importance occurred. People were born, and people were married, and people died; and, for aught we know, one or two empires were overturned. But the only circumstance that happened, relative to our story, was the visit of Lord Catson to Miss Craggles.

One of the various advantages attending vice, is the great ease of manner which its votaries attain, and which enables them, though perfect

strangers before, to enter at once upon the most villainous conspiracy, without apology, circumlocution, or change of muscle. In five minutes after his lordship's entrance into Miss Craggles's little parlour, the whole history of Hyppolita, as related by her aunt, the comments of Miss Craggles, who pretended to discredit it altogether, her confident assurance of being able to manage a meeting between him and the girl, her silent acceptance of his slipped bank note, and his grateful smile and departing bow—all these had taken place in five minutes after his lordship's entrance into Miss Craggles's little parlour.

But that young lady (as she would probably have us call her, for she was

only forty and a few years) knew too much of the world to perceive any reason for questioning the loquacious veracity of Mrs. Coulter. She was also too prudent to think of decoying or entrapping Hyppolita; but she had another object in misrepresenting both their characters to his lordship, which, whether the reader pleases or not, we shall, if we please, unfold in some subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER III.

PRECISELY at eight o'clock on Saturday evening, the ladies had accomplished their toilet, and then, all things being in readiness, except a hackney coach, Mrs. Coulter sent for one, and offered the waiter fourpence-halfpenny (all the change about her) to procure the best-looking on the stand, in order that, should she meet the Marquis, he might see her equipped in the very first style. The waiter, with a bow, which, next to the Marquis's, was the genteelest she had ever witnessed, assured her that he would obey

her commands; at the same time he begged leave to decline her donation. A man of his rank (for he was head waiter) could not possibly condescend to accept of copper; and had he even a doubt on the subject, the odd half-penny would have determined him.

It was a great pity, however, that Mr. Coulter had not borrowed a pair of silk stockings from the waiter, for when the party were delivering their tickets at the pit door, the person stationed there espied a pair of cotton, and moreover a waistcoat with blue spots. Now it is well known, that the opera cannot go on at all, if people with cotton stockings, and waistcoats with blue spots, are present. The door-

keeper, therefore, accosted Coulter most civilly thus:

"Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons, but we never allow gentlemen to enter here who are not in full dress."

"Odds'ounds!"—cried Coulter—"and a'nt I in full dress? Am I without shoes? am I without stockings? am I without breeches?"

"You are without silk stockings, and a white or a black waistcoat," replied the man—and that is sufficient to exclude you."

"By the son of my mother!"—exclaimed Coulter, with a laugh, which was probably heard behind the scenes—"this here Lunnun town appears to be out of its senses. Punch, tobacco, and contraband goods! Oh, Lord!

What, then, is there such a thing as opera regimentals? Must a man have a badge upon his legs, as well as a mark upon his ticket, to come in here?"

"You express it oddly, Sir,"—answered the man—"but the fact is so."

"Have you any other objection to make to me," cried Coulter. "May be my nose is too big; or I ha'nt teeth enough. I have lost a few of my grinders. Then, too, I weigh seventeen stone, three pounds. Is that too heavy for the benches—hey?"

"You see, Sir," said the man, "there are several gentlemen waiting to give me their tickets, so I have no time for disputing the matter;---only you cannot have admittance till you change your dress."

"I wish the Marquis were here," cried Mrs. Coulter, with prodigious dignity of style.

"See this now!" said Coulter to a troop of young men, who stood round, highly delighted at the scene---"See this now, youngsters! Here am I, a gentleman worth three thousand a-year in Northumberland, and yet I can't get to see a pack of squallers in Lunnun, just because I don't chuse to dress myself like the waiter at Long's. What the dickens am I to do?"

"Have you no silk stockings, Sir?" said one of them with considerable gravity.

"A dozen, for aught I know, in Northumberland," answered Coulter, "but not one in Lunnun."

"I should imagine it impossible," said the gentleman, "to get a pair time enough from Northumberland; you have therefore nothing to do but purchase a pair in the Haymarket."

"Not I, by crackins!" cried Coulter.—"What! pay a guinea to humour the whims of Lunnun town? Come along, Dorothy---I suppose it don't require silk stockings to go back again."

"My dear," observed his rib, "there is no objection made to me, nor Hyppolita; so, you know, we may go in, you know, though you may'nt, my life!"

"Aye, if any of these gentlemen will take charge of you both. What say you, gentlemen?"

All the gentlemen, with one accord, looked towards Hyppolita, and each inwardly acknowledged that she was worth his guardianship. But then, one had to pay fifty visits to fifty titles, in fifty boxes; another had to meet a treated semptress in the pit; another had to regulate an elopement with the fat mother of ten children; a fourth was ungallant; a fifth bashful; a sixth proud. In short, half a minute had elapsed, before a young man, of engaging appearance and elegant address, stepped forward, and offered his services.

A general titter ran through the crowd of beaux, as the proposal was accepted, and three of his friends, who were amongst the number, found them-

selves absolutely compelled to confess, that, though he had done a polite thing, he had betrayed a strange ignorance of what was *prime.* On this occasion, it was evidently *prime* to have quizzed the old ones, and squeezed the young one's finger. In short, there could be no argument on the subject; so the beaux dispersed, tossing their oiled heads. The young man, having given Coulter his card, went in with the ladies, and Coulter himself walked away, whistling, as if nothing had happened.

The ladies, leaning on the gentleman's arm, entered the pit, and took their seats in the centre of it, while he placed himself between them. As yet it was but thinly thronged, and the

boxes were almost entirely empty. But then the house—the house itself—and the signora—the quavering signora!—these, these were more than sufficient to occupy the whole intellect of Mrs Coulter. She looked round and round, and round again, and down to the orchestra, and up to the ceiling; and though she had never heard of Argus, she wished for a hundred eyes. She thought she was a wonderful woman to be in so wonderful a house. Then she thought it was no house at all, but a fairy's palace; and then she thought she could never bring herself to make cheeses again. In short, she thought as much as would answer both for herself and the fool, who certainly thought very little about the matter.

However, the young gentleman (whose name, by the way, was Morland) seemed to think a great deal about her; at least, if one might judge from the direction of his glances. Neither did he suffer these to range in silence; but after some consideration (for he conceived by her intelligent eyes that nothing of common-place would succeed), he thus ventured a sentence.

"I am surprised to see you, Madam, who are younger than your friend, appearing less attracted by the novelty of the scene than she does. Is it that you have less curiosity, or a greater command over it?"

"Laws! I can't tell," said the fair idiot, opening her eyes to a most unmeaning extent—"But I believe it all."

"All what, Madam?" asked Morland, completely stunned by the inanity of her manners.

"All the curiosities," answered she.

"I beg pardon: I merely compared your's and your aunt's curiosity," said he.

"Oh!—o—h!" drawled the fair idiot, as if she had now hit upon it—"I have twice the curiosities aunt has. I have a parrot's egg that she has'nt, and a cuckoo's egg that she has'nt, and an ostrich's egg that she has'nt. And I cut out paper purses that she can't, and make sycamore whistles that she can't, and pop-guns of quills that she can't. And yet, do you know—would you believe it?—they all tell me I am a fool."

"And they must themselves be fools, indeed, if they thought otherwise," said Morland inwardly.

"'Tis hard enough too," continued she, "to be called such names, I that have eighty thousand pounds of my own, own, own, which nobody can touch a penny of if I don't chuse it."

"You must be very happy in having so much wealth," said he.

"I shall buy a yellow coach with it, however," said the idiot.

"And a husband too," said Morland.

"Aye, provided he first praises me a great deal, and worships me as a lover ought."

"You would have him then tell you that you are handsome?"

"Aye, sure, as the flowers in May."

"But suppose he should happen not to think you so?"

"Well, what matter? I hear 'tis his duty to say so, all the same; in particular since I am rich. I dare say now, you are as rich as I am."

"No, truly," said Morland. "I was once an expectant of paternal bounty—I mean to say, that my father might once have made me rich, but he failed, as a merchant, about a year ago."

"Poor young man!"—said the fool, turning towards Morland with a most enchanting look of benignity—"I pity you from my heart. But—but—now don't be angry,—I will lend you any matter of money you like."

"Me!"—cried Morland, with a mo-

mentary expression of surprise, which as instantly changed into one of pity. "Good heavens! you are not serious?"

"Indeed, but I am," answered she with earnestness; and then in a whisper—"and I can get as much as a hundred pounds, and give it to you, without any body's knowing any thing of the matter."

"I am shocked, beyond expression, at your imprudence," said Morland, "for, as you have such easy access to your money, and can offer it so freely to a mere stranger, you will meet multitudes of designing persons in this town who will not scruple to rob you of every farthing they can extract."

"Well," said she, with some spirit,

"I'll make you no more offers, since you seem so huffed, instead of thanking me. But I suppose you think me a fool, as all the rest of them do.—Don't you, Sir?"

"I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance long enough, either to form a judgment, or to take the liberty of expressing it," answered Morland.

"Which is as much as to say that I *am* a fool, but that you dare not own it," returned she. "For, if you thought I was not one, you would be quick enough in saying so."

"At least, your last remark evinces some penetration," replied Morland.

"Do you know where I could buy any gilt gingerbread?" asked she, ra-

pidly—for her thoughts had already wandered from the subject.

"Look," said he, "there is a bit already before you, and soliciting your attention."

It was the Marquis of Veneric, who had just pressed into the bench before her, and fixed his earnest eyes upon her face, in order to be seen by her, in an attitude of admiration, when she should glance that way.

"I am excessively happy to have the honour of seeing you," said he, laying his spread fingers on his star, so as not to hide it. Then stooping forward towards Mrs. Coulter, he contrived to say the same thing in synonymes, and immediately sat down before her.

"I wish that man would give me that star," observed the idiot. "I believe I'll ask him for it."

"Not while I have the honour of being your protector, and while I have influence enough to prevent you," returned Morland. "My dear Madam, you must pardon my freedom; but indeed you seem utterly unacquainted with the customs of society."

"Well, well, well," said she, "I'll do just as you please. I know I am a poor ignorant girl. I wish I had sense. But I'll do just as you please; so pray don't be angry with me."

There was a pathetic manner in this appeal, and a helpless reliance on his friendship and good-nature, which called both into action, and excited

an interest in his mind beyond what he had thought possible a fool could effect.

She now turned her attention towards the stage; and her observations upon what was passing there served to convince him yet more of her extreme idiocy; at the same time, they were often accompanied with a vein of quaint humour, and a dim glimmering of judgment, which proved that some small portion of the brain was still perfect in its anatomy.

Presently she was accosted with a "How d'ye do, Madam?" close in her ear; and on looking round, beheld little Petitoe, seated quite comfortably by her side. To such of our readers as are at all acquainted with Paris, the

description of the theatres there, which he instantly commenced, would be quite useless; and to such as are not acquainted with them, it would be quite unintelligible. We must therefore decline recording his conversation, particularly since it appeared to make no sort of impression upon the fair idiot.

The Marquis saw his attentions with a pain, which, however, his habits of high life easily enabled him to suppress. He knew that Petitoe's designs were honourable, and might be accomplished before his own could be brought to maturity. He therefore resolved on not losing time, and on adopting a bolder style of attack than he had originally intended.

Ten o'clock now arrived, and saw

the opera in its full glory. Every box was crowded; while Fop's Alley, and the three other streets in the pit, swarmed with a multitude of lordlings, pickpockets, and rakes. Captain B— was there, laughing at Captain A— for wearing stays; and Captain A— was there, laughing at Captain B— for wearing false whiskers. There too, in opposite or in adjacent boxes, were to be seen the wife and the mistress of some grave old gentleman: and the mistress had more jewels than the wife; and the grave old gentleman was going alternately from the wife to the mistress, and from the mistress to the wife. In the pit, too, bloods did not scruple to chat with fallen angels, before their mothers in the boxes; but

probably they knew that their mothers in the boxes could not see them, from being occupied themselves with other bloods in the pit. One gentleman ogled through a quizzing-glass stuck fast in the flesh round his eye—a feat which none but himself could perform. An old critic kindly accompanied the song performing on the stage, and would certainly have been heard by all the house, but for the unpoliteness of the actor, who still continued singing. Heard by the house, did we say? Oh, no! the house was one prodigious buzz of voices, and the poor Italian himself might have whistled 'Derry down,' without fear of discovery. Indeed, it is to be observed, that polite people no more go to an opera for the sake of

hearing an opera, than to a charity-sermon for the sake of hearing a charity sermon: and yet the business going forward on the stage was well worth attention. It afforded a moral lesson to mankind; for there the most awful and alarming questions were proposed, discussed, and decided by a song.

Now we propose to all the corporations, patriots, and constituents, of Great Britain, to imitate this laudable example, and, instead of meeting to eat upon a national question, as they usually do, to meet and sing upon it.

Towards the middle of the ballet, Lord Catson made his way half down Fop's Alley; and while peering round to discover any one of the numerous

frail ones whom he sometimes honoured with a seat in his gig, tandem, curricle, or whatever vehicle the dice-box afforded, he espied Hyppolita, attended by the three gentlemen, and surrounded by hosts of youths, who were staring at her new face without the smallest remorse; for, from the attentions of the Marquis, and the rusticity of her companion, which bade defiance to all the machinery of steel stays, they concluded that Venus had sent them down a fresh importation.

Lord Catson therefore took the opportunity of a seat behind her, which had just become vacant, to establish himself; and then, after almost popping his nose into her ear, with a hem! and calling to a supposed friend

in the front, without being able once to induce a turn of her head, he very cavalierly tapped her on the shoulder, and whispered, "Do you remember me?"

She looked round, fixed her vacant eyes upon him for a moment, and then resumed her former position.

"How can you be so cruel?" whispered his lordship again, in the most touching accents. But touching accents were lost upon the fool, who now told Morland that she would count the number of people present; and accordingly she began her arduous arithmetic.

"You are an angel, upon my honour!" whispered his lordship a third time, and hoped great things from paynig her divine honours.

"Do you know that gentleman?" enquired Morland, in a low tone.

"I an't quite certain," replied Hyppolita. "He looked very hard at me in a shop to-day, and I must have looked at him too, or how could I remember him? So, I suppose, we may speak to each other now, may'nt we?"

"By no means, I beg," said Morland. "In this town young ladies never make an acquaintance without an introduction."

"I had no introduction to *you*," cried Hyppolita.

"I am happy to hear it," interposed Lord Catson, who had caught her last sentence, and was thence assured of her being legal game. "I trust,

therefore, you will not refuse me a share in the honour of your conversation, though I have had no introduction.

"Excuse me, my lord," said Morland. "The lady has not the pleasure of knowing you; and under all the circumstances, I cannot permit you to address her."

"If the lady permits me," returned his lordship, "I shall not ask your leave."

"Whether you have her permission or not," said Morland, in a whisper, "be well assured, I will *protect* her from your conversation."

"My good Sir!" said his lordship, in a low, sweet, confidential voice, "you don't know whom you are so anxious about."

"I do not, certainly," answered Morland; "but her father has confided her to my charge."

"Her father!" said Lord Catson. "You are imposed upon shamefully. Far be it from me to insult a modest woman: but this girl is *of us*, take my word for it."

"Is your lordship certain of this?" asked Morland, rather confounded.

"To a demonstration," answered his lordship—"she is one of a new gang, and that old woman accompanying her is the mother-abbess."

"Why, the girl herself is certainly an idiot—a mere driveller," said Morland—"one calculated to inspire contempt, instead of passion."

"That may be," returned his lord-

ship---" but she is handsome, and I make no doubt they have tutored her well."

"Aye, truly," said Morland, who was now quite convinced of her being an impostor, "for she boasts that she has eighty thousand pounds."

"How could you possibly be so duped?" cried his lordship, laughing heartily.

Morland blushed with shame and indignation; but determined to let the mother-abbess know, before he quitted them, that they were discovered. Turning, therefore, to Mrs. Coulter, for he judged the fool unworthy of a sarcasm, he thus addressed her:

"I have just been thinking, Madam, that the scene of the cotton stockings

was admirably contrived, and went off with great nature and spirit."

"Laws! yes, indeed," answered Mrs. Coulter, who never dreamt of irony, and only half comprehended polished language. "I see now, that poor Coulter would have quite shamed us, if he had comed in:—wouldn't he, Marquis?"

The Marquis bowed.

"Perhaps so," said Morland; "but then the young lady, and her eighty thousand pounds, are so excessively interesting."

"Aye, poor thing," cried Mrs. Coulter. "'Tis a pity so great a fortune should fall to one of her weak intellects. An't it, Marquis?"

The Marquis bowed.

"But we must get her well married: musn't we, Marquis?"

The Marquis bowed.

Morland, hearing her address a Marquis so familiarly upon family matters, now found himself somewhat puzzled. At the same moment his attention was called away, by hearing Lord Catson and little Petitoe in high dispute.

"I don't know who you are," cried Lord Catson.

"But I know who you are," squeaked Petitoe. "Every one knows who you are—So, address the lady again, at your peril."

"What is the matter?" asked Morland.

"Oh, Sir," said the fool, laying her hand upon his, while tears ran down

her cheeks, "let me go home: don't interfere: let me go home."

Morland hesitated a moment upon the part he ought to adopt. 'Tis true he had reason to believe his company infamous; but then he had promised to protect them; and there was a possibility that Lord Catson had misinformed him. Besides, the evident distress of the idiot interested him in some measure, though he knew it proceeded more from mental weakness than innocence.

Just as he had resolved to risk the raillery of the whole tribe, by turning bully to a procuress and her damsel, Lord Catson and Petitoe had exchanged cards.

"I must also beg leave to trouble

your lordship for your address," said Morland.

"A dozen, if you wish," replied his lordship, presenting a card. He then rapidly retired from the scene, in order, we presume, to make a will for the disposal of forty guineas, *minus* half-a-crown.

Mrs. Coulter and the Marquis, whose attention had also been attracted by the disturbance, now enquired the cause of it, and were answered by Hyppolita that the gentlemen had just been quarrelling about her, and that they ought to be ashamed of themselves. As she seemed considerably agitated, the Marquis thought this a favourable moment for transferring his gallantry from Mrs. Coulter to her,

and accordingly commenced a conversation, suited to her intellects, about dress, equipage, love, and beauty. This, however, was lost upon the fool, who seemed quite absorbed in such thoughts as fools usually have. Petitoe too now and then addressed her, but with a look of triumphant confidence, which seemed to say: "you know I am to venture my life for you to-morrow." Already in fancy had he shot his man, and received her acknowledgments, and her hand. He sat erect: his chest heaved with heroism; and, in a word, he felt himself almost as tall as a middle-sized gentleman.

Meantime, Morland was endeavouring to ascertain from Mrs. Coulter

whether his suspicions respecting her were well-founded, or otherwise. She, as usual, was very communicative, and her story was plausible enough. But when he enquired whether she had any friends who resided in town, she mentioned the names of two most respectable families, and at the same time lamented that neither of them were in London at present, though she expected their arrival daily. This might be all false; Morland, therefore, was still without a satisfactory solution, and still doubtful whether he ought to risk his life;—or, what was worse, become the butt of his acquaintance, for the sake, perhaps, of a hacknied demi-rep, and an idiotical courtezan.

It was consequently with considera-

ble satisfaction that he saw the curtain drop, and the spectators taking their departure. The party struggled out amongst them, as well as they could, nor waited to taste the commixture of a thousand breaths in the round room.

The Marquis saw the ladies into a coach, and then hastened back to gaze at a meditated dutchess. Morland and Petitoe, having escorted them to Long's, arranged their plan of proceeding, with respect to the fracas at the opera, and then separated till the next morning.

CHAPTER IV.

At ten o'clock the next morning Morland and Petitoe, having met together again, and consulted on the occurrence of the preceding night, waited upon Coulter, and begged to speak with him in private. The two gentlemen were therefore shown into an empty drawing-room, and presently Coulter entered, who showed great satisfaction at seeing them.

Morland then addressed him, though with some coldness:

"You may recollect, Sir, that I am the person whom you entrusted last

night at the opera with the care of two ladies."

"Zooks! to be sure I do," answered Coulter: "and I was just putting on my boots to try and make you out somewhere or other; for my wife told me you and this here gentleman quarrelled with a fellow, who was insulting my niece; so I thought to prevent a shooting-match: or, if that wouldn't do, to take a shot myself."

"Probably you are not aware," said Morland, "that your own and the ladies' characters have been called in question by the gentleman with whom we exchanged cards, and that it will be necessary for you to afford us such information on that point as will justify our proceeding any further."

"That is," said Coulter, "if I should prove to your satisfaction that I am a gentleman bred and born, you would take steps to get yourself shot through the head, before four-and-twenty hours were over it."

"I should certainly risk my life to protect a respectable family from insult," answered Morland.

"So would I," echoed Petitoe.

"Why then," cried Coulter, "I won't commit second-hand murder, by giving you a syllable of satisfaction on the subject."

"You therefore leave it quite at our discretion to consider you a gentleman or not," said Morland.

"That you do," echoed Petitoe.

"Damn me! if I do, though," cried

Coulter; "for, if you tell me that I an't a gentleman, by crackins, I will knock you both flat on the floor."

"At least we might have had a more convincing proof of the gentleman than a threat of personal violence," said Morland.

"That we might," echoed Petitoe.

"You shall have no other, then," cried Coulter, "so take it, or leave it, my spanking lads. Only this much for you, Master Spokesman, I left my wife and niece with you, to guard them from insolence, and the crush coming out. A scoundrel insulted them—you have not chastised him—therefore you have insulted them too, and must give me satisfaction—there is the whole up-shot of the business."

"Which places me in a ridiculous dilemma enough," returned Morland. "For, if I could consider you in such a light as to make me accept your defiance, I should certainly hold myself bound, by the same rule, to refuse. However, Sir, you have challenged me; and therefore, though you might have declined stating your pretensions to being a gentleman, when only other's lives were concerned, you cannot, in honour, withhold the information now that you have also implicated your own life."

"How the devil have I implicated my own life," asked Coulter, "when you say you won't fight me? But only promise to fight me, and I'll tell you who I am, though you shoot me for

my information. There is an offer for you! What say you now, my jockey, hey?" And he hit Morland a most encouraging slap on the shoulder.

"That it is evident you wish to conceal your real character," replied Morland; "and that I have not quite so much curiosity as to find out what a man is, by putting an end to his existence."

"Aye, my sweet boy!" cried Coulter. "You wouldn't be so inhuman as to kill the bees for the sake of their honey. Rabbit such Lunnun-bred etiquette, say I! So, now, all I ask of you is the name of the rascal that insulted my niece."

"Lord Catson," answered Morland.

"Then I'll Catson him, I warrant,"

cried Coulter. "Good bye t'ye, *gentlemen*. For, though I have no proof of your being gentlemen, I scorn to sconce a shot, by shamming disbelief. Good bye t'ye:—and when you have wives and nieces yourselves, I hope you'll also have spirit enough to defend them." Saying these words, he bolted out of the room.

The young men remained to debate upon the present appearance of the case. Though Coulter had refused to acquaint them farther, with regard to himself, there was an honest and manly frankness in his manner, not likely to be attained even by the most experienced practitioner in fraud. Still, in such a place as London, they felt it necessary to act with caution; and,

after some consultation, decided upon seeing Lord Catson, and demanding his authority for the information he had given them.

They therefore sallied forth, and after an hour's search, ingeniously discovered his lordship's place of abode; for his cards had misdirected them, in consequence of his having the day before decamped from his former lodging, where he had been recruiting his health, in the airy situation of a third floor. They then sent up their names by the servant-girl (his men-servants either being out at that moment, or else discharged a few years previous) and were admitted into a small parlour below stairs, while his lordship prepared to descend sundry flights from his bed-chamber above.

The gentlemen had waited about ten minutes, when his lordship entered the room, and proffered a hand to each, which, however, was declined.

"I take this visit extremely kind," said he, "after last night's occurrence; and, I trust, we shall soon come to an amicable eclaircissement."

"That," answered Morland, "will depend in a great measure upon your lordship's ability to prove your assertion respecting the character of the ladies under my protection last night."

"I shall feel no hesitation or difficulty in satisfying you upon that point," returned his lordship. "The place I first met them was Miss Craggles's in the Strand, who, both of you must know, is a notorious procuress. It was she who informed me

what description of people they are, and I have actually employed her to procure me a meeting with the young one."

"For the present, then," said Morland, rising, "I shall wish your lordship a good morning."

"Good morning, my lord," said Petitoe.

"Are you proceeding to Craggles's?" asked his lordship.

"Certainly," replied Morland.

"Then I will do myself the honour to accompany you."

"Excuse us," said Morland; "we have particular business on our way."

"I shall follow you, however," returned his lordship. "Craggles may prevaricate, unless I am there myself to confront her."

The gentlemen bowed and retired; and his lordship, without waiting for his new gig, made a hasty toilet, and issued out after them.

Morland and Petitoe, having reached the house, found Miss Craggles in the shop, and very abruptly demanded of her whether she had not informed Lord Catson that the two ladies in question were of infamous character?

Miss Craggles, who foresaw a storm, and who, in fact, had not ventured quite so far in her imputations as his lordship found convenient to assert, assured the gentlemen that she had never said so; nay, that she had never seen either of the ladies before they came to her shop on the day his lordship had met them there.

"Pray, Madam," asked Morland,

" for what purpose did they come then ?"

" To buy millinery," replied Miss Craggles.

" At whose recommendation ?" asked Morland : " for, without meaning any offence, Madam, no respectable person would send them to you."

" They came in a hackney-coach," answered Miss Craggles ; " and the coachman afterwards told me that they desired him to drive to any milliner's he pleased : so, as he happened to know me, he drove hither."

" Do you recollect the number of his coach ?" said Morland.

" Fifty-four," replied Miss Craggles ; and, as she spoke, Lord Catson entered.

"How goes it, Craggles?" cried his lordship, with a careless, swaggering, and yet confused address.

"Not much the better for your lordship," replied she, "as I find you have been traducing my character."

"And I find you have been doing the same by that of other ladies," said his lordship.

"'Tis a falsehood," answered she. "All I said was, that I suspected them;—and, to be sure, I suspect every lady who comes into my house—so then you commissioned me to try and introduce you to the young one."

"And did you not tell me that the young one came here by appointment?—that she slept here last night?—that she had run off from her friends a

month ago, with a serjeant of dragoons?—and that her price was twenty pounds? Answer me that, Craggles."

Now not one syllable of all this ever came from the lips of Craggles; but his lordship saw there was nothing for it but a dash; so the night's rest, the serjeant, and the twenty pounds, were all the produce of his lordship's brain, as he went along the Strand.

"'Tis all false!" cried Miss Craggles, flashing honest indignation; "and you want to ruin my character."

"That would be a pity, for 'tis pretty well *done up* already," retorted his lordship.

"False again!" cried Craggles, in a still sharper key; "for, except obliging gentlemen with a few innocent girls

(and I'm bold to say, no woman in town brings better goods, in that way, or deals fairer than I do) nobody can say black is the white of my eye."

"Talking of your eye," said his lordship, "how long is it since you got the black one at Drury-lane?" And as he spoke, he winked at Morland, just as one man of honour would wink at another while quizzing a convicted liar.

"And how long is it since *you* got the black eye, for cogging dice?" cried she.

"Your lordship shall hear from me soon," said Morland, as he left the shop in disgust.

"And from me," echoed Petitoe, as he followed.

The ex-oyster wench, and the first master of slang in Christendom, had now a regular *set-to*. We have not, we confess, documents sufficient to enable us to decide which of the combatants came off conqueror; we only know that his lordship, after a long contest, hurried out of the house, wishing his antagonist's tongue roasted at a certain fire, which, by all accounts, would have spoiled it in the cooking.

Meanwhile, Morland and Petitoe had proceeded to discover the coachman; and having questioned him, found that Miss Craggles's statement was perfectly correct.

Satisfied, therefore, that his lordship had wantonly, and without sufficient authority, traduced the reputation of

the two ladies, they hastened to prepare for the extreme appeal.

Hardly had his lordship returned home, to dress for dinner——in other words, it was eight o'clock in the evening, when two gentlemen waited upon him, with a particular and pressing request, that he would have the kindness, if not inconvenient, to do Messrs. Morland and Petitoe the favour of meeting them at Hounslow on the following morning. Nothing could be more civil: and as his lordship was not at all deficient in politeness, he assured them he should feel infinite pleasure in acceding to their solicitations. His lordship then saw them to the door himself, and apologised for the absence of his valet, who, he stated,

had just gone, by his orders, as far as Westminster Bridge, to enquire the price of a laundalet.

During the whole of this sultry day had poor Coulter, with a gigantic cudgel in his hand, and a human face not much smaller than the life carved upon it, paraded the whole town, with the hope of meeting and chastising his lordship, of whose singular gig he had procured a faithful description from the waiter at Long's.

It happened, however, that his lordship passed him in his gig at least five times during the day; but as the waiter did not know that his lordship had just purchased a new one, it was no great wonder.

Neither was it any great wonder

that Sir Thomas Wheeler (a man of fashion and a four-in-hander) should have broken his curricle the day before, while endeavouring to describe a figure of eight with it in Hyde Park. But mark the consequence: his coachmaker and Lord Catson's happening to be the same, he borrowed his lordship's old gig, while his curricle was repairing, and in this substituted vehicle made his entrance into Bond Street.

Scarcely, however, had he advanced farther than Hookham's, when Coulter, who by this time had almost given over the chase, and was returning slowly to the hotel, espied the long-looked-for gig, just as it came abreast of him. No time for ceremony. He flourished his enormous sapling,

darted across into the middle of the street, and fairly knocked down the horse with a blow. He had just stepped towards the driver, to level him with his horse, (though he had long since put himself on a level with it) when a chariot passing rapidly near him, obliged him to dip both head and body under the gig. In the mean while, Sir Thomas Wheeler jumped out on the other side, and before Coulter could extricate himself, wrested the gigantic switch from his hand, as he lay, like a spread eagle, on the ground.

By this time about five-and-twenty persons had assembled round the gig, (for in London people collect at the rate of ten per second) some of whom

held Sir Thomas fast, whilst others performed the same kind office for Coulter.

"Let me at him!" exclaimed Coulter, struggling hard to get free: "only permit me to murder him."

"What have I done to you, honest man?" said Sir Thomas.

"Insulted my wife and niece," cried Coulter. "Do you remember the opera last night—hey?"

"I was not at it," answered Sir Thomas.

"Death and age!" exclaimed the other, "I suppose you deny, too, that you are Lord Catson."

"I do indeed," returned Sir Thomas.

"Now, here is a special beast for you!" cried Coulter: "he first pleads an alibi, and then denies his own name, for fear of a broken head! Oh, Lunnun town! Lunnun town!" And Coulter, in spite of his rage, burst out laughing.

"Never shake thy gory locks at me;
Thou canst not say I did it,"

cried Sir Thomas.

"What is the matter, Sir Thomas?" cried a gentleman, who had just come up.

"My horse is knocked down; I am a Lord; and I'm to be knocked down myself. This is the whole story."

"A strange one enough," said the gentleman; "but I perceive you have been mistaken for another person. This,

Sir, is Sir Thomas Wheeler," addressing Coulter, who, he saw, was the principal actor in the piece.

"The devil it is!" cried Coulter. "Confound the gig! I thought it was Lord Catson's."

"And so it was," said the gentleman. "Sir Thomas has only borrowed it."

Coulter instantly sprang from his keepers, grasped Sir Thomas's hand, begged his pardon, offered to stand a drubbing, recanted his offer as beneath the dignity of a gentleman; and, in fine, invited him into Long's, while part of the harness, which had been broken, was repairing.

Sir Thomas, who under a broad-brimmed hat contained much good-

nature, forgave him freely, and accepted his invitation. They sat down in the coffee-room, and Coulter then made him acquainted with the particulars of the transaction at the opera. Sir Thomas dissuaded him from having recourse to the cudgel, but upon the express condition that he would be the bearer of a message to his lordship, as Coulter himself had no acquaintance in town. To this the other assented, and then took leave for the purpose of executing his commission.

It was not till after the departure of Morland's and Petitoe's friends that Sir Thomas had an interview with his lordship, who appointed the same time and place which these gentlemen had already fixed upon.

We do not pretend to know which of the four future combatants slept the soundest that night. This, however, we know, that if any one of them boasted he was as composed as usual, and fearless of an anticipated bullet, that man, beyond all question, belied his feelings; unless, indeed, he were either a madman or a fool. To meet death in its most tranquil shape, must, even to the best of Christians, appear an awful event; but to him who meets it with his hand raised against another's life, it must appear doubly so. We have heard of men, who could display address enough (for we cannot term it courage) to say the most facetious things, while pulling the fatal trigger: such as, "Mind your bread-basket;"

"Take care of your canister," and similar phrases; which, by the way, as the dying speeches of men of honour, ought to have surpassed those of hardened assassins at the new drop. In our humble opinion, a duel is a very serious amusement indeed, and ought to be conducted with a solemnity suitable to the occasion. The fact is, though duelling may be criminal in the individual, it is beneficial to the community; and therefore men should meet more for the purpose of asserting their own honour, and of preserving the station which they hold in society, than of avenging an insult or an injury by taking the life of their antagonists.

At the same time, we are far from

applauding the ingenuity of those heroes who have invented the middle mode of asserting their honour by the pistol, and yet preserving their bodies from the bullet. This mode has often been practised on the turf with great success. A gentleman horse-jockey is considered not to be *pluck*—so is another. They happen to sit together in a coffee-room; and, by degrees, come to so good an understanding upon the subject, that a misunderstanding arises between them on the ensuing day. A meeting is appointed. The seconds, men of undoubted honour, charge with real lead. The principals, men of much humanity, take aim so as that the real lead shall pass innocently by: after which they suffer themselves, with

great difficulty, to be reconciled; and the piece concludes with their expending that money on newspaper paragraphs, which might otherwise have gone to surgeons, apothecaries, or undertakers.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, at six o'clock, the various parties were on the ground. Lord Catson arrived in his gig, accompanied by his friend Captain Adon. Sir Thomas drove Coulter thither in his curricle, which happily had been repaired in sufficient time for the occasion; while Morland with Lord Valence, and Petitoe with Lord Leander, as seconds, came in post-chaises.

Lord Valence, though a distant relation of Morland, accompanied him on this emergency, not so much for the sake of befriending him, as of seeing

a duel; for an English duel was a curiosity his lordship had never lighted upon in his travels. Indeed, he was one of those men who pique themselves far more upon having dipped their noses into the crater of Ætna, or pilfered a splinter from the base of Pompey's pillar, than upon having studied the customs and manners of their native country. Address his lordship upon the polity of the Cherokee Indians, or the sort of bow men make in China, and he was all eloquence. But talk to him upon the system of taxation at home, you would suppose it extended even to his own tongue. However, it would not be quite fair to tax language, which is not under home jurisdiction; and certainly

more than half the phrases his lordship spoke were the produce of foreign soils. Nothing flattered his vanity more than not to be comprehended; nor was it unusual to hear him join, in one sentence, the honied, warbling words of Italy with wedged clusters of German consonants.

His lordship was not alone a traveller, but an experimental philosopher. He boasted that he had eaten something of every thing:—rat-soup, stewed vermin of a thousand tribes, and some will add, that he once tasted the spare-rib of a murderer. 'Tis certain, at least, that he preferred the flavour of a dog that died in a ditch, to one that fell by the butcher. He had also the talent of talking about

places which he had merely read of, in such a manner, that you would suppose he had actually seen them. The only mode of distinguishing, was by the degrees of exaggeration and ornament which he employed. He read through a bit of smoked glass, and reconnoitred through a magnifier.

But we must not keep the combatants standing in the grass all day. The four seconds had retired a few paces aside to consult, and left the four principals behind to divert the time as well as they could. There they stood, like lambs for the slaughter, while the violent gesticulations of the seconds would lead a stranger to suppose them the principals.

Morland was examining his pistols; Petitoe was humming loud enough to be heard by his antagonist; his antagonist was taking out his newly-redeemed watch, to try whether he had any chance of being back before the whist-party was broken up; and Coulter, though as brave a soul as ever drew trigger, was describing figures with his foot, and thinking of his dear brats in Northumberland; when, on a sudden, Lord Leander started out of the group of seconds, exclaiming:

"No! no! the Patagonian javelin, to a dead certainty."

And close after him came Lord Valence, exclaiming:

"No! no! the Chesapeak bow and arrow, to a living demonstration."

"What!" cried Morland, "are these to be our weapons?"

"Not that I know," replied Lord Valence: "but just think! Leander actually prefers the javelin to the arrow!"

"At least, it would be but decent to defer the dispute," said Morland.

"I tell you, Valence," cried Lord Leander, "I once knocked off a wren's head with the javelin!"

"For heaven's sake! my lords," said Morland.

"And I tell you, Leander," cried Lord Valence, "I once tumbled a bee with the arrow."

"Do consider our situation," said Morland.

"Aye, when you shot at a whole swarm," cried Lord Leander.

"Is your tongue as accurate as your javelin, my lord?" said the other.

"At least, it does not draw a long bow," retorted Lord Leander.

"A fool's bolt is soon shot," said Lord Valence.

"And yet you have not hit me with it," said Lord Leander.

"Any time, then, your lordship will appoint," said Lord Valence, bowing.

"This moment, if you wish," answered Lord Leander.

"And the subjects of the dispute shall be the weapons to decide it," said Lord Valence.

"Agreed, my lord."

"How did this extraordinary affair commence?" said Morland to Captain Adon.

"On my honour," answered Adon, "I a—cannot a—precisely tell. But a—they were chusing the pistols, and a—one of them a—ran out in praise of some outlandish javelin, and t'other a—of some trans-atlantic bow and arrow; so a—to it they fell:"—and Captain Adon chafed a fresh curl into his whisker.

"Whither are they going now?" cried Morland.

"Absolutely to their chaises for those said weapons," answered Adon: "they a—brought them here, in order to shoot at marks a—in case a—our little fracas should terminate without loss of lives."

"Upon my word," said Morland, "I am of opinion we shall begin without them."

"That we can easily do, and end too," returned Adon; "for I have Lord Catson's authority to say, that having ascertained the report of his informant, Miss Craggles, to have been utterly destitute of foundation, his lordship has no objection to apologize, both to those gentlemen, who have done him the honour to meet him here, and to the ladies themselves."

In this speech Captain Adon forgot the *a;* and indeed, if we recollect right, he seldom made use of it, except in a first address, when he wanted to stamp himself at one stroke the finished gentleman.

In short, Lord Catson had advanced, apologised, pledged himself to beg the ladies' pardon, and received an acknowledgment for his candour from

the three antagonists, before their lordships' return.

Soon afterwards they arrived, the one with an enormous spear, and the other with a formidable bow and arrow.

"All is happily over," said Morland to them, "as Lord Catson has apologised."

"Oh, well—'tis very well—have you a knife, Morland?" said Lord Valence, fumbling at his weapon.

"If I had," answered Morland, "I would cut the string of your bow, to prevent the folly you are about to commit."

"We have sworn not to be dissuaded," cried Lord Leander, "so we must insist upon there being no sort of interference on the subject."

It was in vain for the rest of the gentlemen, who now gathered round them, to say a word in behalf of common sense. The rival travellers were bent upon mutual slaughter—the one Patagonically, and the other à la Chesapeak. At length, therefore, the gentlemen collected in a group, and left them to the God Benamuckee.

Their lordships now measured about thirty paces, and stood.—Awful moment! The one, who had tried almost every human experiment in his travels, was now, perhaps, about to try his last. The other was content to cut off a beautiful minor poem in its bud :—a thousand tropes and figures might be transfixed by an arrow, for ever; and he might himself fall a victim to a bar-

barous weapon, as his poetry may shortly do to an uncouth phraseology.

They had privately agreed (since none of the spectators would give the signal for battle) to take it from the flight of a crow that was perching on an adjacent tree. They therefore held their weapons in a hostile position, and fixed their eyes upon the crow. The crow, however, from sheer ignorance of what was going forward, would not budge an inch; so there stood our heroes, a full quarter of an hour, till their arms were quite tired. By this time a titter began among the spectators (who were not let into the secret of the crow) at seeing the combatants, as they thought, afraid to commence hostilities; and this titter soon expand-

ed itself into a shout of laughter, the chorus being led by Coulter. Whereupon, the crow, probably taking it as personal, flew off in a huff, and in three seconds after, the javelin and arrow were sent on their respective errands.

Lord Leander, beyond all doubt, was a dead man, had the arrow gone strait through his brain; but most happily that missile weapon took a direction five yards and a half on one side of it. It was also a sight highly gratifying to the humane heart, to see the javelin singing along so carelessly, three yards at least above the head of Lord Valence. The spectators shouted, and the combatants ran, each after his own weapon, to try once more their skill in homicide. Again inter-

ference proved fruitless, and again they faced about, but found themselves sadly at a loss for a crow. In this exigency, they resolved upon advancing against each other, and discharging their deadly weapons, without a signal, and at any moment that best suited their convenience.

Accordingly, both parties began their march, the one with his weapon poised above his head, the other with his arrow pointed, and his bow half bent. They were within ten yards of each other, before they gave the second volley;—but they might as well have had the united extent of their travels between them; for the weapons passed on, without stopping a moment, and stuck fast in the ground. They run,

draw them out, and renew the charge; which, for the third time, proves bloodless. The knight of the javelin recovers his weapon first, as it fell nearest; speeds after the knight of the bow, whose arrow had flown to a distance, and hurls it at him, but misses. 'Tis then the arrow's turn to miss—then the javelin's again, and then the arrow's again. At length both weapons meet together on the ground, and their panting owners, overcome with rage, raise them at the same instant, and begin to drub each other, without mercy. The gentlemen cry shame, rush between them, and, with much ado, prevail upon them to cease hostilities, shake hands, and wash their faces.

Thus ended this memorable combat,

wherein, 'tis certain, Lord Valence proved himself a better marksman by a yard and a half than Lord Leander.

The party now proceeded from the ground, and at eleven o'clock, Lord Catson waited upon the Coulters, and apologised in form.

The story of the duel soon took wind, and towards dinner-time arrived at such a state of improvement, that nobody would know it to be the same clumsy thing that had entered into life just after breakfast. Their lordships, by the latest accounts, had fought in trans-atlantic costumes. The arrow was poisoned; and poor Lord Leander, some said, had already died of his wound—while others asserted that the Hottentot Venus had sucked out the

virus; though this was rather liable to contradiction, as that respectable creature happened just then to be lying quietly in her grave. As for the Patagonian javelin, it had performed all manner of wonders. You had your choice, whether it entered through Lord Valence's cerebrum, or cerebellum, oxter, or chitterlings; for each of these departments had its several advocates, who could take their oaths of the fact.

But, if fame magnified the duel tenfold, it magnified the beauty of the fool, who had occasioned the duel, a hundred-fold. Though it made her deaf and dumb, and blind, from her cradle, it gave her a face, such as never had been seen in this world before. Her

hair was a collection of sun-beams—her eyes were brighter than a whole day's sun-beams tied together, and her features surpassed all that mortals had heretofore conceived of divine. Words were wanting—description stood still—the *prodigious prodigy* was all they could call her. Painters prepared their pencils, beaux their glasses, and lurked and breakfasted at Long's, with the hope of a peep at the *prodigious prodigy*. Such feats did fame perform, perched on a west-end chimney, nor neglected her other business; but, as usual, kept dropping pebbles into the ocean, till their circles spread to the ends of the earth.

Morland, who felt very little more than half pleased with his own con-

duct in the affair, and who thought that he ought never to have questioned the character of the ladies, acted very differently from the common customs of mankind on such occasions; for he waited upon the Coulters, confessed his want of decision and judgment, and endeavoured, by his attentions and offers of service, to atone for past deficiency and indecision.

The consequence was an invitation to their family dinner, which he accepted, though contrary to all fashionable precedent; for the established rule is never to take a dinner, for the purpose of gratifying your entertainer, unless you expect to find at his table either high rank, great wealth, or a turtle. Now Morland had only the

prospect of a country couple, a fool, and a cut of salmon. It is, therefore, with some confusion and modesty, we confess to our readers, that Morland is actually our hero. Nay, we are quite at a loss what apology to make, or how to claim the reader's indulgence, when we further own, that, notwithstanding the extreme idiotism of poor Hyppolita, who was this day, if possible, more silly than before, our hero retired from the party, with certain feelings in her favour, which, but for the shame of the thing, we might absolutely term love. 'Tis fact, however, that he thought her interesting, even in her very folly; that he felt convinced she was by far the most lovely creature he had ever seen; and that he said to himself, just

as he got into the street: "If she had only as much brain as would entitle her to be evidence in a court of justice, I would marry her to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

In a day or two after, the Marquis of Veneric called at Coulter's, and heard there, to his great mortification, that Morland had already dined with the family, and that he was one of the best young men in the world. Even the fool herself volunteered her sentiments of satisfaction, in such warm terms, that the Marquis actually protracted his visit an hour and a half, in order to counteract, by his own superior graces, so dangerous a prepossession. At length he *tore himself away*, as he was good enough to inform them, and bent his steps up Bond Street, a superannuated

victim to the captivations of a driveller. Morland, he now perceived, would prove a far more serious rival than Petitoe; nor did he doubt that both of them would make every effort to repair their pockets with a golden thread from her housewife.

Full of a thousand schemes how to thwart them, and succeed himself, he turned into a fruiterer's in Bond Street, and called for an ice. "I'm sorry, my lord," said the fruiterer, to Lord Athens, who was in the shop, "that I have no longer the honour of furnishing your lordship's dessert."

"Why so?" said Lord Athens: "did I ever deal with you?"

"All your life, till three months ago," replied the other.

"It had escaped my memory," said Lord Athens; "but the fact is, I leave all my culinary patronage in the hands of Hunt, my butler."

"So I find, my lord," said the fruiterer: "and I must inform your lordship, that you have left it in the hands of a man who does not consult your interest, as you will acknowledge when I tell you that he had the insolence to drop dealing with me, because I would not consent to charge your lordship in my bills for more fruit and ices than I furnished to your table, and then pay him the overplus. If I sent a dozen peaches, for instance, I was to charge a dozen and a half, and give him the price of the half dozen."

"I am truly sorry," said Lord Athens; "but Hunt is a useful man, and a traveller; and my cook, who was with me in Constantinople, and who understands the principles and constitution of rice as well as any pasha or vizer in Albanopolis, or Dyrrachium (which, by the way, ought to be called Durazzo), or Joannina, or Polina (which is the ancient Apollonia); my cook, I say, is my butler's grand-uncle, by the mother's side, and could dress me a dish out of Horace, or a Grecian manuscript, as well as out of the "New professed Cook."

"I know nothing, my lord," said the man, "about Elbapopopes, or Paulina: I only know that it is hard enough I should lose your lordship's custom,

because I would not consent to swindle you, and still harder that a rogue should be countenanced, because he is a traveller."

"My good Sir," said Lord Athens, "you mistake the matter. I did not hire Hunt for his honesty, but for his taste. Honesty I expect from my agent; but any one who knows any thing, knows that nobody stipulates for honesty with his butler. However, if I think of it, I will discharge him the moment I go home; though most probably my *memory* will not supply me with any *recollections* sufficiently precise for that purpose."

"'Tis very accommodating, no doubt," said the man, as his lordship left the shop; "but I suppose he thinks

a man all the better for wanting a virtue, just as he thinks a statue twice as valuable for the loss of a nose!"

The Marquis of Veneric had just begun a phillippic against dishonesty (for he would no more cheat a man of a guinea, than fly in the air, though he would defraud a father of his child, or a husband of his wife), when a set of clatter-heeled bloods entered prime, with damns and laughter, and seeming to think the whole world deaf. One snatched at the newspaper; another at a bunch of grapes; a third half seated himself on the counter, and kicked it in time to the whistling of a fourth, while each had his own private reason for preferring himself to any of his companions, and if he could not find that

in his mental reason, he was at least certain to find it in his hat, or his boot, by the eighth of an inch, or a tassel, or Cordova leather.

One of these hopefuls was a Captain Naso, of the Guards, who once gave half a year's pay to a celebrated painter to draw him at full length; but happening to have a tolerable pair of lips, he kept the poor painter three days at that favourite spot, and might perhaps have kept him at it till the day of his death, had not this spirited young officer suddenly cut the canvas with his penknife, in despair, at finding that no pencil could do his mouth justice.

Another was the delicate, and interesting, and honourable Mr. Nevy. To describe a non-descript is impos-

sible; but it is at least some satisfaction to identify a man by his aversions, if one cannot sketch him by his propensities. The Honourable Mr. Nevy had an aversion to every thing manly. Entering the army, he said, was becoming a licensed murderer; and he would never put himself in the way of getting spattered all over with a man's brains. Hunting was a perspiring exercise, productive of dirty boots. In a word, his soul was so deplorably put together, with more than womanly nicety, that his being a man was considered a cruel mistake of Nature.

With these were Captain Adon and Lord Catson: the rest were of the mob of gentlemen, who seem brought into the world merely to fill up the va-

cancies of a table, when a whole family have sent apologies; to take unportioned daughters off the hands of poor noblemen; and to support or ruin half the tailors in town, just as the gaming-table chuses.

"I say, Naso," drawled out Nevy, "that was a deuce of a quiz who supped at Long's last night. I protest his rural coat and accent were extremely inimical to me."

"'Tis shameful that Long should suffer such a bore in his house," said Captain Naso.

"Gad!" cried Lord Catson, "that must be the very fellow who challenged me for saying civil things to his daughter. I wish, with all my heart, we could fleece him at a hazard table,

or play off some other prank upon him; for I am resolved he shall not leave town without regretting that he ever entered it."

"Could we not decoy him into one of those good houses in Titchfield Street?" cried Captain Adon.

"You have hit it!" exclaimed Lord Catson; "and I think I can manage the matter, if you will all give me your assistance."

The bloods, who had little else in the world to do but mischief, and who foresaw that the great difficulty of their lives—killing a day—was likely to be accomplished, assented with much delight; and the whole party adjourned into the inner room, to lay their scheme. The Marquis alone remained

in the shop. He did not wish to appear exactly an accessary: but as he saw that Lord Catson was resolved on plaguing Coulter, he determined to await the event of the deliberations, and then try whether he could not turn them to some account.

In a very few minutes the party came out of the back shop, laughing immoderately, and soon afterwards several went away, after arranging to meet again in an hour. Lord Catson himself was about to go, when the Marquis, who had a sort of gaming acquaintance with him, and besides, *knew his man*, as the phrase goes, called him back, and said:

"You were rather unlucky the other night, my lord."

"Aye, aye," answered Lord Catson; "but I have won back all my losings since then."

"Because," returned the Marquis, "if at any time you should have occasion for a hundred or two, make no ceremony of applying to me."

Lord Catson also knew his man, and consequently that he was about to be hired in the capacity of Sir Pandarus of Troy.

"Then, my lord," said he, "I shall not scruple to take advantage of your kind offer; and in the mean time my services are quite at your command."

The Marquis then enquired the particulars of the project against Coulter, and finding it would both assist and accelerate a dashing enterprise against

the niece, which he had that very morning half determined upon, he retired with Lord Catson into the back shop, and there concerted the manner of its execution. But the reader must not be let into the secret before the business takes place, lest his imagination should form much merrier ideas of what was to come than our rigid regard for truth would permit us to relate.

About two o'clock Coulter had gone down into Long's coffee-room, and was poring over a paper, when the waiter entered, and gave him a note. He opened it, and found what follows:

"Sir,

"Without acquainting Mrs. Coulter with the contents of this letter,

I beg, if you have any regard to her peace of mind and your own, that you will hasten, without a moment's delay, to No. —, Titchfield Street, where you will, on sending up your name, be admitted to me, and made acquainted with a dreadful affair which is hanging over you.

"A FRIEND."

"Oh, Lunnun town! Lunnun town!" exclaimed Coulter, as he laid down the note, and put his elbows on the table, and his chin between his hands; "why can't a poor devil of a gentleman stay peaceably in you a week or so, without plots against his life!"

So saying, he heaved a profound

sigh, and read the latter part of the composition over again. The more unintelligible he found it, the more frightened he got. At length he started from his seat, took his hat, asked the waiter the way to Titchfield Street, and then set forward with prodigious strides.

On arriving at the house, he was shewn into a parlour, and begged to see the gentleman of the house. Accordingly, in came a most respectable looking personage.

"I got a letter from you, Sir," cried Coulter.

"You did, Sir; but it arrived too late. You are poisoned, beyond all shadow of doubt," said the respectable looking personage. "Indeed, I see it in your

face already. I have sent for a physician: do you send for your poor wife. Here, write her a line; but desire her not to inform your niece:" and he put ink and paper into his petrified hand.

"Heaven's will be done!" cried Coulter: "this is by far the worst thing that ever happened to me. But inform me."

"Not a syllable," said the other, "till you write to your wife."

Coulter then scratched upon a slip of paper:

"My darling Dorothy,

"I am at No. —, Titchfield Street. —Come: I want you—Not a word to my niece.

"B. COULTER."

"And now, Sir," said Coulter to the master of the house, "what is this horrid plot, which you warned me of too late?"

"You have been cherishing a snake in your bosom," replied the other. "An idiot of a girl has been tampered with by the secret society of assassins, to try the effect of a newly-discovered poison upon you. You took it in your coffee this morning. But I am a doctor, and may save you yet."

"Sure enough! sure enough!" exclaimed Coulter, clapping his hands in despair; "I recollect telling my wife that the coffee was not clear. Send constables and arrest my niece this instant; for you mean her."

"I do not say 'tis she," returned the

other; "but I recommend your sending for her. Here, write a note to her, as I shall dictate."

Coulter wrote as follows:

"Dear Niece,

"Your aunt and I are waiting for you at Islington, where some of our friends, whom we did not before know were living near London, have prevailed upon us to spend the day. Their daughter will call in a chaise, and bring you to us.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"B. COULTER."

By this time a basin of hot soup was brought to Coulter, in which, he was told, antidotes were infused; and he gulped it down with far more des-

peration than appetite. The doctor then left him to take some repose.

For half an hour he lay restless, and wondering greatly that neither Dorothy nor Death had yet arrived. But at last the door opened softly, and a lovely little girl of sixteen stole into the room, and approaching the sofa, gazed on him with great anxiety.

"Well, my dear!" said Coulter.

"Oh gemini, gracious!" cried the sweet maiden; "you are almost well: your face looks quite fresh again, and the doctor said that would be a sign of your recovering—Oh, dear me, how glad I am!" and in a transport of juvenile delight, she threw herself upon his neck, and kissed his cheek.

"Lord bless me!—don't," cried Coulter.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the girl, quite abashed.

"Nay, nay, child, do and welcome. Odds heart! I'm recovering, I'm certain. I feel quite another man now."

"I'll go and call my father," said the girl, tripping away.

"But mind, come back again," cried Coulter.

The doctor now entered, and pronounced him out of danger, but advised his remaining quiet on the sofa for a couple of hours longer.

"In the mean while," continued he, "I will send my girls in to entertain you;" and he quitted the room.

Four or five charming girls now came in, with wine and cordials, gathered round him, seated themselves

on the sofa, where he lay, and, from laughing and talking, began playing with him. They tickled him, kissed him, fought for him, and tossed him about like a plaything. The innocent old man, between the soup, the cordials, the release from death, and the endearments of the girls, was almost out of his senses. He romped like a young dog, and roared like a tyger. Not even the injunctions of the doctor could restrain him; for he jumped from the sofa, chased them round the room, and threw himself on the floor, while they pinched, and cuffed, and caressed him with the greatest competition. At length, all but the maiden of sixteen (whom he had evidently preferred the whole time) ran

out of the room, just as he threw himself, quite exhausted, on the sofa. Then it was that his little favourite began to betray all the violence of a sudden passion. She sat beside him, sighed, pressed his hand, and looked into his very soul, with the most pitious tenderness. Coulter was naturally a humane man, so, without more ado, he snatched her to his heart, and was imprinting breathless kisses upon her lips, when suddenly the door opened, and in rushed old Dorothy Coulter.

"Gracious goodness!" cried she, "here is a sight!"

"I couldn't help it, if I was to be shot for it," said Coulter, trundling his legs down from the sofa. "I was

poisoned this morning with coffee, and am only just recovering. So I just thought—that a—a kiss or so might be of use to me; and accordingly I beg your pardon."

"You are an unworthy disciple," cried Mrs. Coulter; "and unless you can prove yourself stark mad, I will never pardon you while I live."

By this time, the poor overcome virgin had escaped out of the room; and Coulter, with his tale of poison, and the perfidy of his niece, soon put all jealous whimsies out of his wife's head.

They now sat awaiting the expected arrival of Hyppolita, and resolving to quit London the moment they had hanged her; but were interrupted by

the sudden irruption of a troop of young officers, who came shouting into the room, and calling loudly for Jane, and Emma, and Louisa, and rolicking Bet.

"Hell have you! can't you come out of that room?" cried a girl in the hall; and Coulter recognized the tuneful voice of his little favourite.

"Ha! rolicking Bet," exclaimed one of the officers: "who would dare disobey your sweet vociferations?" and the whole set instantly left the parlour, ran up stairs; and then such a glorious riot arose between them and the girls, and so new and numerous were the oaths uttered by both parties, that the country gentleman and his rib stared full five minutes at each other, col-

lecting fresh ghastliness from their mutual faces, before either could speak a syllable.

"We shall get murdered," quoth Mrs. Coulter, at length.

"So think I," rejoined Coulter. "We had best bolt."

Bolt they accordingly did, and made their way to Bond Street, Coulter striding out strenuously, and his dame, with the elbow of his coat grasped fast in her hand, pattering half a yard behind.

When they reached Long's, and ran up stairs to the drawing-room, they found it empty. They searched the bed-rooms—no Hyppolita there. They rang the bell, and were told that a young lady had called for her, in a post-chaise, and that they had driven

off together. Coulter now recollected his letter to her, and perceived all the symptoms of a horrible plot against her peace, her person, and her property.

Down he ran, without his hat, and puffed and blew through twenty streets, asking every person he met whether they had seen a chaise, with two young ladies in it?

One replied that he had seen such a sight the day before yesterday—another that he had seen twenty such sights in Germany—a third asked him, had the ladies stolen his hat?—a fourth begged to know the price of beaver; till at length the poor worried old man seated himself behind a hackney-coach on a stand, wiping his forehead, and recovering his breath, when he fortu-

nately saw Morland passing along the street. He whooped, he ran, he hollowed; and, as Morland, in conjunction with the whole street, turned about, he found Coulter just in the act of grasping his arm, and with eyes and mouth awfully open, telling him of Hyppolita's sudden disappearance.

Morland instantly hurried him back to the coach, helped him into it, then followed himself, and ordered the coachman to drive to Long's.

But it is an approved old saying among novelists :—" We shall now leave him, and see what has become of our heroine."

CHAPTER VII.

When Hyppolita, with infinite difficulty, had spelt through the whole of Coulter's letter, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and hastened down to the door, where the postchaise was in waiting. The young lady who sat in it received her with great cordiality, and desired the postboy to hurry forward as fast as possible.

We forbear entering into a detail of their conversation during the drive; for the one was a fool, and the other seemed to know it. They had, however, proceeded four miles out of town,

before Hyppolita expressed her surprise at finding the distance so great. She was answered that they were now just at their journey's end, and accordingly in a few minutes they stopped at the end of a very narrow avenue, thickly shaded with ash and chesnut trees. They then alighted, walked up the avenue, and Hyppolita found herself in front of a small, but neat house, with a semi-circle of green pailing before it, and a flower garden in full blossom.

Having entered the house, they were shown into a pretty little parlour, and informed that Mr. and Mrs. Coulter, together with the master and mistress, had ridden about two miles off, to see a nobleman's seat.

While the young lady sat humour-

ing, with childish prattle, the silly Hyppolita, the door was thrown open, and the Marquis of Veneric entered.

He shook hands with Hyppolita, protested how happy he was to meet her there, enquired after her health, hoped she was well, asked how she was, and spent an hour and a half in assiduous endeavours to cultivate an attachment.

At length, after many symptoms of uneasiness, she ventured to say :

"I wonder—so I do—where in the world uncle and aunt can be."

"I will go, and send some one after them," said the young lady, and left the room.

"Would you like to be married, and get rid of these old uncles and aunts?"

said the Marquis, as he drew his chair closer to Hyppolita.

"Don't know, Sir, sure," answered she.

"Because," continued the Marquis, "I doat on you to desperation—my heart bleeds, and bursts, and throbs for you, my charming, sweet, amiable, little dear! and if you will only marry me, you shall ride in your own, own coach, with three footmen behind in a flame of gold, and red ribbons on the horses; and gallop along like mad; and you shall have a fine big house, and fifty waiting-maids, and such dresses! —oh, such beautiful dresses!—will you marry me, my darling?"

The fool coloured like scarlet during this speech, and, considering she was a fool, looked very angry indeed.

"Come now," said the Marquis, "don't be vexed. We shall be as happy as the days are long. Do, like a good girl, get over this little fit of modesty, and say—"yes."

Any girl, endowed with common sense, would have laughed at such an address;—but Hyppolita of course took up the matter quite seriously, and had sprang out of the room, before the Marquis had well finished his speech.

He, however, caught her, while she was trying to open the hall door; and she then burst into such a violent fit of crying, that he left her in the care of the young lady, who conducted her up to a bed-room, and by degrees soothed her into a state of tolerable composure.

"For goodness sake!" cried the poor idiot, after a long interval of

silence, "to whom does this house belong?"

"To the Marquis of Veneric, my dear," answered the young lady; "and you shall be mistress of it if you chuse."

"And an't my aunt and uncle to dine here?" asked Hyppolita, in breathless alarm.

"Not at all, my love," replied her companion: "old folks only spoil sport."

"Then I'll go away," said Hyppolita, starting up.

"You cannot," returned the other, "without the Marquis's permission; nor will he grant it, till you consent to marry him."

Hyppolita sat down again, put her

hand to her forehead, and seemed to make an effort at consideration. The result of it, however, was an obstinate silence, which she preserved during the whole of the day, in despite of every effort which either the Marquis or his female friend could make. She suffered herself to be led down to dinner, and even ate a little. She heard all the Marquis's impassioned appeals, as if she did not hear, or, at least, comprehend them; and when at length she was shown to her bed-chamber, she sat upon the side of the bed, and could not, by any entreaty, be induced to move. The female at last left her to herself, and locked the door outside.

Next morning the girl found her in the same position, and still preserving

an inviolable silence. And now her eyes appeared to be about losing their power of motion and of vision; nor would she open her mouth when they held a cup of tea to it. In short, they began to think, either that she had quite lost the use of what little sense she ever possessed, or that she was actually dying.

Much alarmed, they now left her above stairs, without taking any precaution against her escape, and went down to consult what they should do.

Fools, it is said, have a sort of cunning, which often takes effect where wisdom would fail, because its plans are more unusual and more unexpected. This idiot had enough of mother-wit to enable her to appear suddenly di-

vested even of the small portion she was born with, and thus to throw her keepers off their guard. For, the moment she found that the door was left open, and that they had retired, she stole down stairs, opened the hall door, and flew, like lightning, through the avenue.

The Marquis and the girl saw her dart by the window, and of course lost not an instant in pursuing her.

The Marquis, however, stopped at the entrance into the road—not because he was already out of breath, as his enemies (for the best of us have enemies) falsely declare; but because he had unfortunately turned his ancle; —for the best of us may turn our ancles. From this station he soon beheld a

gentleman advancing in full gallop, stop as he reached Hyppolita, who was shrieking help, and alight and talk with her. It was Morland. The Marquis recognized him; and, as a proof that his lordship had not wanted breath, he flew back to the house, mounted his steed, and galloping down a bye lane, never paused a moment till he arrived in town.

In the mean time, Morland, who had learned a lame account of the whole transaction from Hyppolita, returned back to the house with her, in order to investigate further; but found it utterly deserted, for the young lady had already secreted herself, on finding that a gentleman had taken the idiot under his protection. Morland, therefore,

determined to return with his charge back to town, and defer any further investigation to a future opportunity.

On the way, Hyppolita learned from him, that, on hearing of her disappearance, he had made strict enquiries at the house in Titchfield Street, with regard to the perpetrators of the plot; but the people affected utter ignorance of it, and said that the girls were sent in to Coulter by two gentlemen whom they had never seen before. It was not till about half an hour before he met Hyppolita that the Marquis occurred to him as one of the party concerned; and being already acquainted with his lordship's convenient country-seat, he took horse instantly and proceeded thither.

The poor grateful girl thanked him for his friendly efforts, with tears in her eyes, and a look of the most affectionate gratitude. Morland felt moved—sensibility at least, he saw, was not denied to her by nature; and as he gazed upon her face, which was now beautified by expression, he thought, if Fate had made her his sister, her mental imbecility would have only served to render her the dearer to him; though he felt that the voluntary act of making her his wife would probably render him miserable, and perhaps entail her mental calamity on his children.

"'Tis odd," said the idiot, interrupting these reflections, "but I have not any body in the wide world I can call a friend. Do let *us* be friends,

Mr. Morland. Let us be great friends; and pray come often to see me."

"I assure you," returned Morland, "I have a sincere regard for you; and during the short time I remain in this country, I shall feel infinite pleasure in calling often upon you, and your family."

"And are you going to leave the country?" cried she, turning briskly towards him, and colouring.

"I intend sailing for America in the course of a week," answered Morland: "my circumstances are greatly reduced, and I have an advantageous offer there."

"And perhaps," said Hyppolita, "some old lady, with a mint of money, may take a fancy to you, and marry

you; and then you will be rich all at once, you know."

"I shall never marry for money," said Morland, "unless I also marry for love; and not even then, unless my wife possesses those qualifications (as the newspapers say) necessary to render the marriage state truly happy."

"Must she have sense?" demanded the idiot.

"Undoubtedly," replied Morland. "Without good sense, all the other qualities are of no avail, since this is the rudder which steers them through life."

Here the conversation ceased, for Hyppolita began to muse; and presently they approached the town. Morland called a coach at the first

stand, and they drove to Long's Hotel.

Our readers may judge with what joy Coulter and his wife received their niece; what questions they asked, without ever waiting for answers; and how they forgot, during one half hour, to thank Morland for his services. He then left them, with a promise to call again, after he should have made farther inquiries into this extraordinary affair.

Accordingly, he paid the Marquis of Veneric a visit, but his lordship protested, upon his honour, that he knew nothing whatever about the business. He confessed indeed that the house was his, and that a young lady, under his protection, lived in it. He also owned his having found Hyppolita

there on his arrival, and his having been led to believe that she went thither of her own accord, and by the solicitations of his female friend, who had taken advantage of her folly: but he assured Morland that he had made no improper advances, and that he was even deliberating upon the best means of sending her back to her uncle's, when she accomplished her escape out of the house.

Morland then demanded, whether the girl was to be found at the place; and the Marquis answered, that she had only just left him, after begging his pardon for her conduct, and declaring that she would conceal herself, lest any bad consequence should accrue to her, on account of her indiscretion.

Morland warned the Marquis to prepare for a legal prosecution; and the Marquis replied, that two circumstances made him perfectly secure from any attempt of the kind—innocence and idiotism. The one was his own property, and the other Hyppolita's. The one would render her evidence unavailing, and the other would exclude her from being admitted as evidence at all.

The next morning Morland waited upon the Coulters, and on being shown up to the drawing-room, found Hyppolita alone, and with a book in her hand.

"I hope I do not interrupt you?" said Morland, after mutual salutations.

"Not at all," answered Hyppolita. "I was merely dipping into Milton."

"'Tis a stream," said Morland, somewhat surprised at her choice, "that deserves diving, not dipping, into."

"I think so too," returned she; "and, unlike the waters of Lethe, this stream improves the faculties instead of impairing them."

"So it should seem," thought Morland. "Pray, may I ask what passage you are at present engaged in?"

"One which I think is borrowed from Shakespear, and 'musical as is Apollo's lute' seems evidently taken from 'sweet as Apollo's lute, strung with his hair."

Morland stared in astonishment. The

fool was inspired: but he resolved to try how long the inspiration would last.

"Gray," said he, "has borrowed

'Whose iron scourge and torturing hour'

from Milton's

——— 'The scourge
Inexorable, and the torturing hour.'

"I do not know," said Hyppolita, "whether it be not just as fair to borrow thoughts as to borrow money: indeed, more so; for the debt of plagiary, being always public, can always be claimed by the right owner: and, after all, the borrowed thought is a mere duplicate, which leaves the original one undiminished; so that the debtor is enriched, and the creditor is not impoverished. This complaint, however, cannot well be made by a

poet who borrows from himself, as Milton often does. For instance, the idea in each of these expressions is quite the same: 'Darkness visible,' 'palpable obscure,' and 'palpable darkness.' He has besides, 'Dark with excessive light,' and 'Brightness had made invisible.' There are also two passages, the one in the Paradise Lost, and the other in Comus, which are perfectly parallel.

'But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness.'

And,

'But the evil soon,
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix
With blessedness.'

He has also, 'touch'd with heaven's

ray and temper'd ;' ' touch of celestial temper ;' ' swift as a shooting star ;' ' swift as the sparkle of a glancing star."

Hyppolita ceased, and Morland, breathless with delight and anxiety, taxed his memory for something more to say, that might draw her out still farther.

" And yet," said he, " Milton did not borrow from himself, because he wanted a sufficient number of ideas on any given subject. As a proof of the inexhaustible store of his mind, he employs no less than eight or more distinct similies to describe the countless multitude of fallen angels; and each simile is most poetically embellished. He compares their numbers

to autumnal leaves, scattered sedge, a cloud of locusts, the populous north, the small infantry warred on by cranes, the heroic race of Thebes and Ilium, British and armoric knights, bees in spring time, stars of night, dews of morning; in short, you must not expect that when Milton has described a thing once, he will never describe it again. He gives you repeated descriptions of the infernal regions, and of their prince; and each succeeding one is stronger and more sublime than the former."

"He is a wonderful poet, no doubt," said Hyppolita: "and yet, after all, I argue, with Johnson, that one reads him more as a task than a recreation. Give me the easy, simple, elegant style. Give me Goldsmith."

"And yet even he, familiar as he is, borrows from the majestic Milton," said Morland. "For instance, his

'Woods over woods, in gay theatric pride,'

is obviously borrowed from Milton's

'Shade above shade, a woody theatre.'

"Enough of poetry," said Hyppolita. "Have you read GLENARVON?"

"Who has not?" exclaimed Morland. "But what is your opinion of it?"

"That the character of the hero is a chef-d'œuvre," returned she. "If it be quite fictitious, one wonders at the genius which could invent it; and if it be drawn from the life,* one is not less

* The character of *Glenarvon* has been very generally ascribed to a noble and eccentric lord; and it is considered to be a very striking likeness.

astonished at the strength of pencil which could pourtray such a contrast of shade and sunshine, without injuring the general effect of nature."

"And yet," said Morland, "the author appears to me to excel still more in playful satire and poignant elegance of wit. For instance,"—(and he took up the book, which lay on the sofa) "the scene where the PRINCESS of MADAGASCAR is supposed to die.* 'If, then, I must die,' she cried, weeping bitterly at the necessity, 'send with haste for the dignitaries of the church. I would not enter upon the new world without a

* We say supposed, for we are very credibly informed that the princess is still living in all her glory.

passport; I, who have so scrupulously courted favour every where in this. As to confession of sins, what have I to confess, Hoiouskim? I appeal to you. Is there a scribbler, however contemptible, whose pen I feared might one day be turned against me, that I have not silenced by the grossest flattery? Is there a man or woman of note in any kingdom that I have not crammed with dinners, and little attentions, and presents, in hopes of gaining them over to my side? What minion of fashion, what dandy in distress, what woman of intrigue, who had learned to deceive with ease, have I not assisted? Oh, say, what then are my sins, Hoiouskim? Even if self-denial be a virtue, though I have not

practised it myself, have I not made you and others hourly do so?' Hoiouskim bowed assent. Death now approached too near for further colloquy. The princess, *pinching her attendants, that they might feel for what she suffered,* fainted; yet with her dying breath again invoking the high-priest: 'Hoiouskim,' she cried, 'obey my last command: send all my attendants after me, my eider-down quilt, my coffee-pots, my carriages, my confectioner, and tell the cook——' As she uttered that short but comprehensive monosyllable, she expired!"

"They say," said Hyppolita, "that the lady, whose friends are so kind as to set her down as the original of this portrait, has too much good breeding to shew any outward rage; and that she

forces herself into a vivacity that is destroying an excellent constitution. She even reminds her friends that she is a princess, gives twice as many dinners as before to the reviewers, and, with a desperate merriment, is about getting-up a piece, in which her funeral is to be performed, and the dead or yellow poet is to be "carried twice, by mistake, to the grave."

"I can no longer," exclaimed Morland, starting from his seat—"I can no longer refrain from expressing my amazement, my delight at the unaccountable difference between your conversation this day and every other day I have talked with you."

"How so?" said Hyppolita, with a look of vacant surprise.

"I cannot conceal from you," con-

tinued he, "that, till within the last few minutes, I thought you an actual *imbecille*. You appeared to have had neither understanding, information, wit, or agreeability. I now find you possessed of all. Beauty and simplicity were your only attractions; and even these proved sufficient to create in my heart a sensation which endeared you to it, in despite of your seeming deficiencies in every mental qualification. Suffer me then to implore that you would resolve this mystery, and tell me how it happens that you are at times all that is pitiable, and, at others, all that is enviable."

"Laws!" said Hyppolita, with a most unmeaning drawl of idiotic laughter, "sure it's all that tutor's stuff!"

"That tutor's stuff!" exclaimed

Morland, shuddering, and disgusted at the change of face, manner, and expression, which she so suddenly and unexpectedly exhibited, "what tutor?"

"Him that comes to lesson me up for the great folks," replied she: "he taught me all about MILTON, and GLENARVON: and there's Pope too, Alexander Pope, and a lot besides; and trouble enough I have had with them, and head-aches too."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Morland involuntarily: "why are not these graces real? Oh! what a happy half hour of illusion have I passed, and how wretched am I now, at finding the picture of perfection I thought I had beheld only a fleeting dream!"

He had taken his hat, and was leaving the room.

"Stay," cried the poor idiot, dissolving into tears: "it is not my fault that I am silly. I have done all I could to be wise; but nature has set her face against me; so pray do not you also desert me. Won't you come to see me again?"

"I must, I find I must, though nothing can excuse my folly," replied he, returning, and affectionately taking her hand. Farewell, for the present, and remember, when we next meet, to repeat no more of your tutor's lessons, nor deceive me with the delusive idea that you are a divinity."

Morland then hastily quitted the room, and the fair idiot, affected, she scarcely knew why, sat for some time in a stupor of undefinable emotions.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DAY or two afterwards, Morland had occasion to go into the shop of a certain bookseller in Piccadilly, for the purpose of purchasing some theological tracts; and, indeed, he could not well have fixed upon a more eligible mart for such productions.

As Morland entered the shop he saw a lady sitting in it, and reading the postscript of a newspaper. Had she not been dressed like a girl of fifteen, she might have been accounted venerable enough; nor were four rows of ribbon round the extremity of her

frock in good keeping with the *embonpoint* of her person. To let our readers into a secret at once, this lady was no *less* a personage than the celebrated Miss Chariot, the inventress of new ideas, the patroness of new discoveries, the tormentress of men of letters, and the hauntress of libraries and public institutions. The moment a new genius appeared upon town, she found out his cover, unearthed him, hunted him down, and when she had fairly come up with him, never *cracked cry* till she had gone through politics, physics, metaphysics, poetry, history, and Doctor Darwin, leaving him at length in the most deplorable state of exhaustion, from the efforts of combating her fanciful ideas. It is even said,

that when the Game Chicken was in the height of his glory, she sought him out, and gave him such a volley of volubility, that he took to his bed. She had frightened him, it seems, by a dissertation on anatomy, in which she represented so dreadfully the fragility of the nerves, fibres, and ligaments, of the human frame, that the poor fellow, though naturally a courageous man, made a vow never to fight again.

Her grand object in life is notoriety. She wishes she were a man, that she might distinguish herself as an orator; and thinks she has more of Burke than Sheridan about her. To be considered a woman of extensive attainments, she gleans through every book on every known subject, and having found its

leading feature, trusts to filling up the details from her own fertile imagination. To be considered a woman of ready memory, she sits up a whole night to get passages off by heart, and then rising early next morning to exhibit, runs into every literary resort in town, and repeats her lesson. In this manner, it is said, she one day recited forty of Darwin's verses, at six different places, before dinner, and each time assured her auditors that she had never recited them before. She is possessed of so unlimited a fancy, that she actually imagines that she has travelled in Italy, though she was never out of England; that she wrote the *Conversations on Chemistry*,* ex-

* The lady of Dr. Marcet is the actual author of this work.

pressly for the instruction of her two nieces, Emily and Caroline, whose names occur in every dialogue, though it is doubtful whether she understands them; that she is related to several distinguished persons, though Noah is the only common tie of affinity; that she can speak several languages, though she can but talk her own; that sundry dedications are addressed to her, though it is certain they are to her sister.

It is her principal delight to institute a comparison of similiarity between Darwin and Milton, because people are petrified at the proposition, and so talk of her; for to be talked of is the *summum bonum* of her earthly felicity.

Dr. Darwin for a long time remained in sole possession of all her powers of eulogy, till fortunately Dr. Jenner appeared, and Flora ceased to flourish. Nothing was then so beautiful as a scab from a cow. But the poor doctor soon got a rival. Miss Chariot preferred being a patroness to being an idolatress, and the glory of *bringing out* a grocer in the capacity of poet, and, we believe, also a writer on vaccination, was too much for mere woman to resist. Accordingly, out he came; but what has become of him since, pastry-cooks and milliners have the best chance of knowing.

We have thus given a full-length portrait of the accomplished Miss Chariot, and so far from making her any apology for the freedom, we confidently

challenge her gratitude, and forestall her delight. We even anticipate an excellent town-hunt in consequence. We expect she will make use of every exertion to ferret us out, and become acquainted with us, and thank us for the favour we have done her, in having thus good-naturedly indulged her love of notoriety. "*Dicier, hæc est*" ought to be her motto, and we presume it will soon be her destiny.

The entrance of Morland, and his enquiry after a book of controversy, at once stamped him a man of letters, and the consequence was, that Miss Chariot prepared to show herself off in her best style. Indeed, rather than spend a minute of her existence unheard, she would utter a declamation to the porter

or the errand-boy. Accordingly, thus she commenced:

"Upon my word, Sir, I admire your taste in having selected that book for your evening's amusement. I read it through in an hour: twelve books a-day are my allowance, exclusive of newspapers, in one of which I find my friend Sir Francis Burdett's speech, whose style reminds me of Sir Francis Bacon's, one of our first men, Sir Humphrey excepted; and nothing can exceed him, since a man eminent in chemistry must exceed every other man in any other department."

Morland was thunderstruck, and stood staring at her in amazement, which she unhappily mistook for admiration; for already had she displayed

to him her knowledge of divinity, politics, oratory, philosophy, and chemistry.

"That man," she continued, "must merit universal superiority, who discovers to mankind that a cauliflower is a metallic substance; that fire, earth, air, and water, are not elements; and that, instead of four elements, there are forty."

Miss Chariot had now got into her own element; so she sailed before the wind which she had just unclassified.

"An elementary body is one that has never been decomposed; whereas fire, air, earth, and water, are all susceptible of decomposition."

"This seems to be merely an argument of words," answered Morland,

smiling; "and I do not see why those four substances should be deprived of their old titles by a set of new intruders. Neither does it strike me as necessary, or even expedient, to assert that a cauliflower is a metal. Should I ask a friend to dine with me on meat and metals, he might think, perhaps, that I had a design on his life."

Here some of the free caloric was suddenly communicated through Miss Chariot, for her person dilated a good deal, as she said:

"Having already laid my sentiments on that subject before the public, in my *Conversations on Chemistry*, I must decline any further discussion; and, now I think of it, this is the hour my

friend Sir Humphrey and I have appointed to analyse the *penny-a-quart soup*, which they are distributing to the poor. We expect to find that the component parts, which, singly, may be nutritious, are, in their attraction of composition, poisonous to the last degree. In this case I shall dispatch a messenger instantly to Lord Cochrane, Sir Francis, and the dear Hunt, the latter of whom has promised to let me know the meaning of the word *oligarchy*."

Miss Chariot was now about to leave the shop, when she was prevented by the sudden entrance of a gentleman, whose appearance bespoke him clerical.

"My dear friend, and best of poets," exclaimed Miss Chariot, seizing his

hand, forcibly seating him in a chair, and then sitting down beside him, "how goes on your volume? Have you set yourself about what I begged of you, to out-do Milton? Your sea-port town already rivals his Pandemonium. Do tell me all. Hang the soup! I must analyse you instead. Do tell me all. I hope you have set yourself about what I begged of you—to read my *Conversations on Chemistry*—how I prove that bodies are good conductors of heat, in proportion as they feel cold to the touch. Do tell me all."

"I must tell you, then," replied the clergyman, "that, after having read your opinion on that subject, I was rather astonished to find you after-

wards asserting that ice, which appears to be the coldest of all bodies, was a *bad* conductor of heat. How can you reconcile this contradiction ?"

Miss Chariot, who, so far from having written the book herself, had hardly read it through, felt a little embarrassed at first; but she never piqued herself upon bashfulness, so went on just as if nothing had happened.

"Apropos of ice—I am writing a volume to prove that ice may be made by heating a vessel of bay-salt and water, from *above*, instead of *below;* because, as heat does not descend, but ascend; and cold does not ascend, but descend; and as fire is a bad conductor of heat because it is not cold; and as cold is a good conductor of heat be-

cause it is not warm; the heat above must gradually absorb all the heat below; by which process the cold becomes colder, till at length a cake of ice will be found at the bottom of the vessel, while the water above is bubbling and hissing, and evaporating with heat."

The clergyman heard only the former part of this divine experiment: he took advantage of the remaining part, in calling inwardly upon heaven to help her and himself too, who, he now found, by woeful experience, had got involved in a conversation in which instruction was hopeless, and from which extrication was impossible.

This gentleman, who was truly a most gentle and amiable character, had

published, about thirty years ago, a poem apparently as a contrast to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, and had not been in town since that period till a short time before the present interview. Miss Chariot having, after much assiduity, at length discovered him one day at the Royal Institution, affected not to know him, and purposely led the conversation of the company to his writings. These she eulogised so highly, that the grateful poet, little dreaming of the torment he was preparing for his future days, introduced himself to her; in half an hour began inwardly to curse his folly; in an hour had got into a copious perspiration; and when at length she had released him from his sufferings, found

himself in the condition a man may be supposed to be who has been pilloried, dragged through a pond, baked in an oven, and tossed in a blanket, before he has eaten his breakfast.

It was, therefore, with unfeigned sorrow and sickness of heart that he now heard Miss Chariot commencing an account of another process in chemistry; namely, to prevent the soul of a dying man from quitting his body, by leaving it no possible outlet. "For, said she, "the soul being, as the ancients say, a *divinæ particula auræ*, and air having a natural affinity to water, a man's soul is rather attracted out of his body than confined in it, by his total immersion in water. Were not this the case, there would be no

such death as drowning. Now fire being a bad conductor of heat, you have nothing farther to do than to find out some fire which does not burn. This fire is phosphorus. Merely, therefore, immerse the dying man in phosphorus. Its liquidity will stop up his pores, so that his soul cannot escape, for the life of it; and its being a bad conductor of heat, will prevent its absorbing the vital spark; so that, in fact, a dying person, who can afford to buy phosphorus, may live on to the day of judgment; and perhaps, by that time, chemistry may be so much improved, as to give him reasonable hopes of surviving the general conflagration."

"I must be gone," said the gentle-

man, starting up, a little shocked, and pulling out his watch.

"Not till I give you the heads of another experiment," cried Miss Chariot, as she caught hold of the corner of his coat.

The persecuted divine cast up his eyes in an agony of despair, and would have given worlds for an experiment to get rid of her.

"I have an appointment at this very hour, Madam," said he.

"That reminds me," said she, "of a sentence in Dyonisius Hallicarnassus."

"And, as I leave town very shortly, I have hardly time to——"

"Now that is so like what Jenner, Sir Humphrey, and all the geniuses,

say to me," interrupted she; "but you are beyond them all. Talk of Scott, indeed!"

"Another time, another time," cried the agitated poet, edging off.

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow," said she, edging after him. "By the way, have you read *The Dissertation on the Time of the End?* I concur with Kett. Pray, one moment. Do you think the fifth vial of wrath is poured out?"

"Oh, it is indeed!" exclaimed the poor man, from the bottom of his heart.

"So then you will go?"

"I must, I must indeed, dear madam; but I shall see you here to-morrow, and give you an opportunity to pour

out the sixth." And with these words he rushed from the shop. Never did London streets afford him satisfaction before: he could almost have knelt and kissed the flags, when he found himself in actual safety from her clutches.

During this time Morland stood in amazement. He had never before seen a human creature of this kind. It was quite a *lusus naturæ;* so finding himself in a mood to see all the other strange animals in town, he left the shop, and visited the wild beasts at Exeter 'Change.

Fortunately for Miss Chariot, another poet at this instant made his appearance; at least, if a shabby dress, and a saffron-coloured physiognomy,

betokening nocturnal watchings, constitute a poet, he was one. At the same time, much wealth, and more economy, fully counter-balanced these attributes. He was a leading man at all the civic dinners given by the corporation of fishmongers; and if you wished to make him your friend for ever, you had only to present him with some old Spanish romance of early chivalry. This bard, who had a habit of tumbling out fifty words in a second, and talked with a low voice, has already been immortalized in *Glenarvon*, under the name of the sallow poet.

Immediately on this gentleman's entrance, Miss Chariot began patting and smacking her lips, as was usual with

her, when about to show off. It is conjectured that she had acquired the custom when she was inventing a quack medicine, which made frequent sippings and tastings necessary.

"You are the very man I wanted," cried she. "Here have I been jaded to inanity by the vapid volubility of a poet, whose Flemish minuteness of portraiture would represent a perspective, with as much detailed microscopism, as a fore-ground. No, give me your misty mellowness, your indistinct sublimity, your fair blending of vernal tints."

This prepared speech had a most complacent effect on the usually uncompromising countenance of the sallow poet, who replied with a smile,

like the yellow ghastliness of an eclipse:

"Nobody, dear Madam, can doubt your taste, except those whose modesty distorts their judgment. Ha—a—a—hey. But as we are on the subject of poetry, have you read Lord Leander's last volume?"

"Oh, the wonderful man!" she exclaimed, and clasped her hands together: "he, he is the only genius of the age that I am unacquainted with. I shall die of chagrin, if I do not know him, and I shall die of delight if I do."

"So then," said the poet, "you probably prefer his poetry to—ha—a—a?"

"What! to your's? Oh, no. Nature, feeling, elegance, simplicity forbid. I am not easily induced to commit the

caprice of abandoning my early favorites: my disposition is constancy. Like the four great metals, I possess, in an eminent degree, durability, malleability, unalterability, and specific gravity."

Gravity itself could hold no longer, and the centrifugal force of the poet's face carried all before it. In a word, he laughed outright.

"Then, to be plain, Sir," cried the indignant lady, "I think you have an excellent face for an evening sky; but 'tis the only rural attainment you possess, though you affect to write such pretty descriptions of the country."

"I have a pen, Madam," cried the poet, shaking his head, as much as to insinuate pasquinade.

"And I have a pencil, Sir," retorted the lady; for to her other qualifications, it must be confessed, Miss Chariot added the art of caricaturing to perfection.

"Use it then, and welcome," said the poet; "and since you are so anxious to see Lord Leander, your favourite, hey—a—a—he dines this evening at Long's Hotel, so you had better pay him a visit there." He then walked forth, evidently a little discomfitted.

Not so Miss Chariot. Her mind teemed with an important project. She had at last the long wished-for opportunity of an interview with the poetic lordling, and she sat rapt in soliloquy for five minutes; then rose, adjusted her green silk dress, and

tripped out of the shop, with a girlishness of gait, and shortness of petticoat, that shewed plainly she was just as proud of her ankles as of her brains.

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